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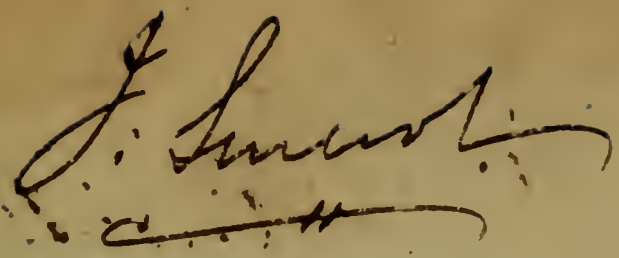

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TWO TREATISES

Tending to awaken

Secure Sinners.

Viz.

1. The Terror of the Day of Judgment, from *2 Cor.* 5. 10.

2. The Danger of slighting Christ and his Gospel, from *Matth.* 22. 5.

By *RICHARD BAXTER.*

The Gift of the Author.

LONDON,
Printed for *Jonas Luntley* at the Three Bibles in Little *Lincolns-Inn-fields.* 1696.

To the Ignorant or Careleſs Reader.

SEeing the Providence of God hath commanded forth theſe plain Diſcourſes, I ſhall hope (upon Experience of his dealing in the like Caſes with me) that he hath ſome work for them to do in the World. Who knows but they were intended for the ſaving of thy Soul, by opening thine Eyes, and awaking thee from thy Sin, who art now in reading of them! Be it known to thee it is the certain Truth of God, and of high Concernment to thy Soul that they treat of, and therefore require thy moſt ſober Conſideration. Thou haſt in them (how weakly ſoever managed by me) an Advantage put into thy Hand from God, to help thee in the greateſt Work in the World, even to prepare for the great approaching Judgment, and not to ſlight Chriſt and his Goſpel. In the Name of God, I require thee caſt not away this Advantage: Turn not away thine Ears or Heart from this warning that is ſent to thee from the living God! Seeing all the World cannot keep thee from Judgment, let not all the World be able to keep thee from a ſpeedy and ſerious Preparation for it. Do it preſently, leſt God come before thou art ready. Do it ſeriouſly, leſt the Tempter over-reach thee, and thou ſhouldſt

be found among the foolish Self-deceivers when it is too late to do it better. I intreat this of thee on the behalf of thy Soul, and as thou tendereſt thy everlasting Peace with God, that thou wouldeſt afford theſe Matters thy deepeſt Conſideration. Think on them, whether they are not true and weighty: Think of them lying down and riſing up. And ſeeing this ſmall Book is faln into thy hands, all that I would beg of thee concerning it, is, that thou wouldſt beſtow now and then an Hour to read it, and read it to thy Family or Friends as well as to thy ſelf: and as you go, conſider what you read, and pray to the Lord to help it to thy Heart, and to aſſiſt thee in the Practice, that it may not riſe up in Judgment againſt thee. If thou have not leiſure at other, take now and then an Hour on the Lord's Days, or at Night to that purpoſe: and if any Paſſage through brevity (ſpecially near the Beginning) ſeem dark to thee, read it again and again, and ask the help of an Inſtructer, that thou mayeſt underſtand it. May it but help thee out of the Snares of Sin, and promote the ſaving of thy Immortal Soul, and thy Comfortable Appearance at the great Day of Chriſt, I have the thing which I intended and deſired. The Lord open thy Heart, and accompany his Truth with the Bleſſing of his Spirit. Amen.

A Discourse of the Terror of the Day of Judgment.

2 Cor. 5. 10, 11. *For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the Terrors of the Lord, we perswade Men.*

IT is not unlikely that some of those Wits that are taken more with things new than with things necessary, will marvel that I choose so common a Subject, and tell me that they all know this already. But I do it purposely upon these following Considerations. 1. Because I well know it is these common Truths that are the great and necessary things which Mens everlasting Happiness or Misery doth most depend upon. You may be ignorant of many Controversies and inferiour Points, without the Danger of your Souls, but so you cannot of these Fundamentals. 2. Because it's apparent by the Lives of Men, that few know these common Truths savingly, that think they know them. 3. Because there are several Degrees of knowing the same Truths, and the best are imperfect in Degree; the principal Growth in Knowledg that we should look after, is not to know *more* Matters than we

be knew before, but to know *that better* and with a clearer Light and firmer Apprehenſion, which we darkly and ſlightly knew before. You may more ſafely be without *any* Knowledg at all of many lower Truths, than without *ſome farther Degree* of the Knowledg of thoſe which you already know. 4. Beſides, it is known by ſad Experience, that many periſh who know the Truth, for want of the Conſideration of it, and making uſe of what they know, and ſo their Knowledg doth but condemn them. We have as much need therefore to teach and help you to get theſe Truths which you know, into your Hearts and Lives, as to tell you more. 5. And indeed, it is the Impreſſion of theſe great and Maſter-Truths, wherein the Vitals and Eſſentials of God's Image upon the Soul of Man doth conſiſt: and it is theſe Truths that are the very Inſtruments of the great Works that are to be done upon the Heart by the Spirit and our ſelves. In the right uſe of theſe it is that the principal Part of the Skill and holy Wiſdom of a Chriſtian doth conſiſt; and in the diligent and conſtant Uſe of theſe lieth the Life and Trade of Chriſtianity. There is nothing amiſs in Mens Hearts or Lives, but is for want of ſound Knowing and Believing, or well uſing theſe Fundamentals. 6. And moreover, methinks in this Choice of my Subject, I may expect this Advantage with the Hearers, that I may ſpare that Labour that elſe would be neceſſary for the Proof of my Doctrine: and that I may alſo have eaſier Acceſs to your Hearts, and have a fuller Stroak at them, and with leſs Reſiſtance. If I came to tell you of any thing not Common, I know not how far I might expect Belief from you. You might ſay, *Theſe things are uncertain to us, or all Men are not of this Mind.* But when every Hearer confeſſeth the Truth of my Doctrine, and no Man can deny it, without denying Chriſtianity it ſelf; I hope I may expect that your Hearts ſhould the ſooner receive the Impreſſion of this Doctrine, and the ſooner yield to the Duties it directs you to, and the eaſier

let

let go the Sins which from so certain a Truth shall be discovered.

The Words of my Text, are the Reason which the Apostle giveth both of his perswading other Men to the Fear of God, and his Care to approve to God his own Heart and Life. They contain the Assertion and Description of the Great Judgment, and one Use which he makes of it. It assureth us that judged we *must be*, and *who* must be so judged, and *by whom*, and *about what*, and *on what Terms*, and *to what End*.

The meaning of the Words, so far as is necessary, I shall give you briefly. *We all*, both we Apostles that preach the Gospel, and you that hear it, *must*, willing or unwilling, there is no avoiding it, *appear*, stand forth, or make your appearance, and there have your Hearts and Ways laid open, and appear as well as we. *Before the Judgment-seat of Christ*, i. e. before the Redeemer of the World, to be judged by him as our Rightful Lord. *That every one*, even of all Mankind, which are, were, or shall be, without Exception; *may receive*, that is, may receive his Sentence, adjudging him to his due; and then may receive the Execution of the Sentence, and may go from the Bar with that Reward or Punishment that is his due according to the Law by which he is judged. *The things done in his Body*, that is, the due Reward of the Works done in his Body; or as some Copies read it, *The things proper to the Body*, i. e. due to the Man, even Body as well as Soul, *according to what he hath done, whether it be Good or Bad*; i. e. this is the Cause to be tried and judged, whether Men have done well or ill, whilst they were in the Flesh, and what is due to them according to their Deeds. *Knowing therefore*, &c. *i. e.* being certain therefore that these Things are so, and that such a terrible Judgment of Christ will come, we perswade Men to become Christians and live as such, that they may then speed well, when others shall be destroyed; or as others, *Knowing the Fear of the Lord*, that is, the true Religion, *we perswade Men.*

Doct. 1. There will be a Judgment. *Doct.* 2. Christ will be the Judg. *Doct.* 3. All Men shall there appear. *Doct.* 4. Men shall be then judged according to the Works that they did in the Flesh, whether Good or Evil. *Doct.* 5. The End of Judgment is, that Men may receive their final Due by Sentence and Execution. *Doct.* 6. The Knowledg and Consideration of the terrible Judgment of God, should move us to perswade, and Men to be perswaded to careful Preparation.

The ordinary Method for the handling of this Subject of Judgment should be this. 1*st*. To shew you what Judgment is in the General, and what it doth contain: and that is, 1. The Persons. 2. The Cause. 3. The Actions. 1. The Parties are, (1.) The Accuser. (2.) The Defendant. (3.) Sometime Assistants. (4.) The Judg. 2. The Cause contains, (1.) The Accusation. (2.) The Defence. (3.) With the Evidence of both. (4.) And the Merit. The Merit of the Cause is as it agreeth with the Law and Equity. 3. The judicial Actions are, I. Introductory, 1. Citation. 2. Compulsion, if need be. 3. Appearance of the Accused. II. Of the Essence of Judgment, 1. Debate by, (1.) The Accuser. (2.) Defendant, called the Disceptation of the Cause. 2. By the Judg. 1. Exploration. 2. Sentence. 3. To see to the Execution: But because this Method is less suitable to your Capacities, and hath something humane, I will reduce all to these following Heads.

1. I will shew what Judgment is.
2. Who is the Judg: and why.
3. Who must be judg'd.
4. Who is the Accuser.
5. How the Citation, Constraint and Appearance will be.
6. What is the Law by which Men shall be judged.
7. What will be the Cause of the Day, what the Accusation, and what must be the just Defence.
8. What will be the Evidence.

9. What

9. What are those frivolous insufficient Excuses by which the Unrighteous may think to escape.

10. What will be the Sentence, who shall *die*, and who shall *live*, and what the Reward and Punishments.

11. What are the Properties of the Sentence.

12. What and by whom the Execution will be. In these particular Heads we contain the whole Doctrine of this Judgment, and in this more familiar Method shall handle it.

I. For the first Judgment, as taken *largely*, comprehendeth all the forementioned Particulars; as taken more *strictly* for the Act of the Judg, it is *the Trial of a controverted Case*. In our Case note these things following.

1. God's Judgment is not intended for any Discovery to himself of what he knows not already, he knows already that all Men are, and what they have done, and what is their Due: But it is to discover to others and to Men themselves the ground of his Sentence, that so his Judgment may attain its End, for the glorifying his Grace on the Righteous, and for the convincing the Wicked of their Sin and Desert, and to shew to all the World the Righteousness of the Judg, and of his Sentence and Execution. *Rom.* 3. 4, 26. and *Rom.* 2. 2.

2. It is not a Controversy therefore undecided in the Mind of God, that is there to be decided; but only one that is undecided, as to the Knowledg and Mind of Creatures.

3. Yet is not this Judgment *a bare Declaration*, but *a Decision*, and so *a Declaration* thereupon: the Cause will be then put out of Controversy, and all farther Expectation of Decision be at an End; and with the Justified there will be no more Accusation, and with the Condemned no more Hope for ever.

II. For the second Thing, who shall be the Judg; I answer, The Judg is *God himself by Jesus Christ*.

1. Principally, God as Creator.

2. As alſo, God as Redeemer; the humane Nature of Jeſus Chriſt having a derived ſubordinate Power. God loſt not his Right to his Creature either by Man's Fall, or the Redemption by Chriſt, but by the latter hath a new farther Right: but it is in and by Chriſt that God judgeth: For as *meer Creator of innocent Man*, God judgeth none, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son, who hath procured this Right by the redeeming of fallen Man, *Joh.* 5. 22. But as the Son only doth it in the neareſt Senſe, ſo the Father as Creator doth it remotely and principally.

1. In that the Power of the Son is derived from the Father, and ſo ſtandeth in Subordination to him as Fountain or Efficient.

2. In that the Judgment of the Son (as alſo his whole Mediatorſhip) is to bring Men to God their Maker as their ultimate End, and recover them to him from whom they are faln; and ſo as a Means to that End, the Judgment of the Son is ſubordinate to the Father.

From hence you may ſee theſe following Truths worthy your Conſideration.

1. That all Men are God's Creatures, and none are the Workmanſhip of themſelves or any other; or elſe the Creator ſhould not judg them on that Right.

2. That Chriſt died for All, and is the Redeemer of the World, and a Sacrifice for All, or elſe he ſhould not judg them on that Right. For he will not judg Wicked Men as he will do the Devils, as the *meer Enemies* of his Redeemed Ones, but as being themſelves his Subjects in the World, and being bought by him, and therefore become his own, who ought to have glorified him that bought them, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. 1 *John* 2. 2. *Heb.* 2. 9. 1 *Tim.* 2. 6, 7.

3. Hence it appeareth that all Men were under ſome Law of Grace, and did partake of ſome of the Redeemer's

eemer's Mercy. Tho the Gospel came not to all, yet all had that Mercy which could come from no other Fountain but his Blood, and which should have brought them nearer to Christ than they were, (though it were not sufficient to bring them to Belief) and which should have led them to Repentance, *Romans* 2. 4. For the neglecting of which they justly perish, and not *merely* for sinning against the Law that was given Man in Innocency: Were that so, Christ would not judg them as Redeemer, and that for the Abuse or not Improvement of his Talents, as he tells us he will do, *Mat.* 25. *per totum.*

4. If God will be the Judg, then none can expect by any Shifts or indirect Means to escape at that Day. For how should it be?

1. It is not possible that any should keep out of *Sight*, or hide their Sin and the Evil of their Actions, and so delude the Judg: God will not be mocked now, nor deceived then, *Gal.* 6. 7. they grosly deceive themselves that imagine any such thing: God must be Omniscient and All-seeing, or he cannot be God. Should you hide your Cause from Men and from Devils, and be ignorant of it your selves, yet cannot you hide it from God. Never did there a Thought pass thy Heart, or a Word pass thy Mouth, which God was not acquainted with: and as he knows them, so doth he observe them. He is not as imperfect Man, taken up with other Business, so that he cannot mind *All*. As easy is it with him to observe every Thought, or Word, or Action of thine, as if he had but *that one* in the World to observe; and as easy to observe each particular Sinner, as if he had not another Creature to look after in the World. He is a Fool indeed that thinks now that God takes no notice of him, *Ezek.* 8. 12. and 9. 9. or that thinketh then to escape in the Croud: He that found out one Guest that had not on a Wedding-Garment, *Mat.* 22. 12. will then find out every unholy Soul, and give him so sad a Salutation as shall make him speechless. *Job* 11. 11. *For he*

knoweth vain Man; he seeth Wickedness also, and *will he not consider it?*

2. It is not possible that any should escape at that Day by any Tricks of Wit and false Reasoning in their own Defence. God knoweth a sound Answer from an unsound, and a Truth from a Lie. Righteousness may be perverted here on Earth, by out-witting the Judg; but so will it not be then. To hope any of this, is to hope that God will not be God. It is in vain then for the *unholy* Man to say he is *holy*; or for any Sinner to deny, or excuse, or extenuate his Sin; to bring forth the Counterfeit of any Grace, and plead with God any Shells of hypocritical Performances, and to think to prove a Title to Heaven by any thing short of God's Condition: all these will be vain Attempts.

3. And as impossible will it prove by Fraud or Flattery, by Perswasion or Bribery, or by any other Means, to pervert Justice by turning the Mind of God who is the Judg: Fraud and Flattery, Bribery and Importunity may do much with weak Men, but with God they will do nothing. Were he changeable and partial, he were not God.

4. If God be Judg, you may see the Cavils of Infidels are foolish, when they ask, *How long will God be in trying and judging so many Persons, and taking an Account of so many Words, and Thoughts, and Deeds? Sure it will be a long Time, and a difficult Work.* As if God were as Man that knoweth not things till he seek out their Evidence by particular Signs. Let these Fools understand, if they have any Understanding, that the infinite God can shew to every Man at once, all the Thoughts, and Words, and Actions that ever he hath been guilty of. And in the twink of an Eye, even at one view, can make all the World to see their Ways and their Deservings, causing their Consciences and Memories to present them all before them in such a sort, as shall be equivalent to a verbal Debate, *Psal.* 50. 21, 22. he will set them in Order before them.

5. If

5. If Jesus Christ be the Judg, then what a Comfort must it needs be to his Members, that he shall be Judg that loved them to the Death, and whom they loved above their Lives, and he who was their Rock of Hope and Strength, and the Desire and Delight of their Souls!

6. And if Jesus Christ must be the Judg, what Confusion will it bring to the Faces of his Enemies, and of all that set light by him in the Day of their Visitation? to see Mercy turned against them, and he that died for them now ready to condemn them, and that Blood and Grace which did aggravate their Sin, to be pleaded against them to the Increase of their Misery: How sad will this be?

7. If the God of Love, and Grace, and Truth, be Judg, then no Man need to fear any Wrong. No Subtlety of the Accuser, nor Darkness of Evidence; no Prejudice or Partiality, or whatsoever else may be imagined, can there appear to the Wrong of your Cause. Get a good Cause and fear nothing: and if your Cause be bad, nothing can deliver you.

III. For the third Point, *Who are they that must be judged?*

Answ. All the rational Creatures in this lower World. And it seems Angels also, either *all* or *some*: But because their Case is more darkly made known to us, and less concerns us, we will pass it by. Every Man that hath been made or born on Earth (except Christ, who is God and Man, and is the Judg) must be judged. If any foolish Infidels shall say, *Where shall so great a Number stand?* I answer him, That he knoweth not the things Invisible; either the Nature of Spirits and spiritual Bodies, nor what Place containeth them, or *how*; but easily he may know that he that gave them all a Being, can sustain them all, and have room for them all, and can at once disclose the Thoughts of all, as I said before.

The first in Order to be judged are the Saints, *Mat.* 25. and then with Christ they shall judg the rest of the World, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2, 3. not in an equal Authority and Commission with Christ, but as the present Approvers of his righteous Judgment. The Princes of the Earth shall stand then before Christ even as the Peasants, and the Honourable as the Base; the Rich and the Poor shall meet together, and the Lord shall judg them all, *Prov.* 22. 2. No Men shall be excused from standing at that Bar, and giving up their Account, and receiving their Doom. Learned and unlearned, young and old, godly and ungodly, all must stand there. I know some have vainly imagined that the Righteous shall not have any of their Sins mentioned, but their Graces and Duties only; but they consider not that things will not then be transacted by Words as we do now, but by clear Discoveries by the infinite Light; and that if God should not discover to them their Sins, he would not discover the Riches of his Grace in the Pardon of all these Sins: even then they must be humbled in themselves that they may be glorified, and for ever cry, Not unto us Lord, but unto thy Name be the Glory.

IV. For the fourth Particular, *Who will be the Accuser?*

Answ. 1. Satan is called in Scripture the Accuser of the Brethren, *Revel.* 12. 10. and we find in *Job* 1. and other Places, that now he doth practise it even before God: and therefore we judg it probable that he will do so then. But we would determine of nothing that Scripture hath not clearly determined.

2. Conscience will be an Accuser, though especially of the Wicked, yet in some sense of the Righteous, for it will tell the Truth to all; and therefore so far as Men are faulty, it will tell them of their Faults. The Wicked it will accuse of unpardoned Sin, and of Sin unrepented of; the Godly only of Sin repented of and par-

ardoned. It will be a Glass wherein every Man may see the Face of his Heart and former Life, *Rom.* 1. 5.

3. The Judg himself will be the principal Accuser; for it is he that is wronged, and he that prosecutes the Cause, and will do Justice on the Wicked. God judgeth even the Righteous themselves to be Sinners, or else they could not be pardoned Sinners. But he judgeth the Wicked to be impenitent, unbelieving, unconverted Sinners. Remember what I said before, that it is not a verbal Accusation, but an opening of the Truth of the Cause to the view of our selves and others, that God will then perform.

Nor can any think it unworthy of God to be Mens Accuser by such a Disclosure, it being no Dishonour to the purest Light to reveal a Dunghil, or to the greatest Prince to accuse a Traitor. Nor is it unmeet that God should be both Accuser and Judg, seeing he is both absolute Lord, and perfectly Just, and so far beyond all suspition of Injustice. His Law also doth virtually accuse, *Joh.* 5. 45. but of this by it self.

V. For the fifth Particular, *How will the Sinners be called to the Bar?*

Answ. God will not stand to send them a Citation, nor require them to make their voluntary Appearance: but willing or unwilling he will bring them in.

1. Before each Man's particular Judgment, he sendeth Death to call away his Soul, a surly Serjeant that will have no Nay: How dear soever this World may be to Men, and how loth soever they are to depart, away they must, and come before the Lord that made them; Death will not be bribed. Every Man that was set in the Vineyard in the Morning of their Lives, must be called out at Evening to receive according to what he hath done: then must the naked Soul alone appear before its Judg, and be accountable for all that was done in the Body, and be sent before till the final Judgment

to remain in Happiness or Misery, till the Body be raised again and joined to it.

In this Appearance of the Soul before God, it seemeth by Scripture, that there is some Ministry of Angels; for *Luke* 16. 22. it is said that the Angels carried *Lazarus*, that is, his Soul, into *Abraham*'s Bosom. What local Motion there is, or Situation of Souls, is no fit Matter for the Enquiry of Mortals; and what it is in this that the Angels will do, we cannot clearly understand as yet; but most certain it is, that as soon as ever the Soul is out of the Body, it comes to its account before the God of Spirits.

2. At the end of the World the Bodies of all Men shall be raised from the Earth, and joined again to their Souls, and the Soul and Body shall be judged to their endless State; and this is the great and general Judgment where all Men shall at once appear. The same Power of God that made Men of nothing, will as easily then new-make them by a Resurrection, by which he will add much more Perfection, even to the Wicked in their Naturals, which will make them capable of the greater Misery; even they shall have immortal and incorruptible Bodies, which may be the Subjects of immortal Woe, 1 *Cor.* 15. 53. *John* 5. 28, 29.

Of this Resurrection and our Appearance at Judgment, the Angels will be someway the Ministers: as they shall come with Christ to Judgment, so they shall sound his Trumpet, 1 *Thess.* 4 16. and they shall gather the Wicked out of God's Kingdom, and they shall gather the Tares to burn them, *Matth.* 13. 39, 40, 41. in the End of the World the Angels shall come forth and sever the Wicked from among the Just, and shall cast them into the Furnace of Fire, *Matth.* 17. 49, 50.

VI. For the sixth Particular, *What Law is it that Men shall be judged by?*

Answ.

Answ. That which was given them to live by: God's Law is but *the Sign of his Will to teach us what shall be due from us and to us*: before we fell he gave us such a Law as was suitable to our Perfection; when we had sinned and turned from him, as we ceased not to be his Creatures, nor he to be our Lord, so he destroyed not his Law, nor discharged or absolved us from the Duty of our Obedience. But because we stood condemned by that Law, and could not be justified by it, having once transgressed it, he was pleased to make a *Law of Grace*, even *a new, a remedying Law*, by which we might be saved from the deserved Punishment of the Old. So we shall be tried at Judgment upon *both* these Laws, but ultimately upon the last. The first Law commanded perfect Obedience, and threatned Death to us if ever we disobeyed; the second Law finding us under the Guilt of Sin against the first, doth command us to repent and believe in Christ, and so return to God by him, and promiseth us pardon of all our Sins upon that Condition, and also if we persevere, everlasting Glory. So that in Judgment though it must be first evinced that we are Sinners, and have deserved Death according to the Law of pure Nature; yet that is not the Upshot of the Judgment. For the Enquiry will be next, whether we have accepted the Remedy, and so obeyed the Law of Grace, and performed its Condition for Pardon and Salvation, and upon this our Life or Death will depend. It is both these Laws that condemn the Wicked, but it is only the Law of Grace that justifieth the Righteous.

Obj. *But how shall Heathens be judged by the Law of Grace, that never did receive it?*

Answ. The express Gospel some of them had not, and therefore shall not directly be judged by it; but much of the Redeemer's Mercy they did enjoy, which should have led them to repent and seek out after Recovery from their Misery, and to come nearer Christ; and for the neglect and abuse of this they shall be judged

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and not meerly for sinning against the Law that was given us in pure Innocency: so that Christ as Redeemer shall judg them as well as others; though they had but one Talent, yet must they give an account of that to the Redeemer from whom they received it. But if any be unsatisfied in this, let them remember that as God hath left the State of such more dark to us, and the Terms on which he will judg them; so doth it much more concern us to look to the Terms of our own Judgment.

Obj. *But how shall Infants be judged by the Gospel, that were uncapable of it?*

Answ. For ought I find in Scripture, they stand or fall with their Parents, and on the same Terms; but I leave each to their own Thoughts.

VII. For the seventh Head, *What will be the Cause of the Day to be enquired after? what the Accusation, and what the Defence?*

Answ. This may be gathered from what was last said. The great Cause of the Day will be to enquire and determine who shall die and who shall live, who ought to go to Heaven, and who to Hell for ever, according to the Law by which they must then be judged.

1. As there is a twofold Law by which they must be judged, so will there then be a twofold Accusation. The first will be that they were *Sinners*, and so having violated the Law of God, they deserve everlasting Death according to that Law: If no Defence could be made, this one Accusation would condemn all the World; for it is most certain that all are Sinners, and as certain that all Sin deserveth Death. The only Defence against this Accusation lieth in this Plea; confessing the Charge, we must plead that Christ hath satisfied for Sins, and upon that Consideration God hath forgiven us; and therefore being forgiven, we ought not to be punished: To prove this we must shew the Pardon under God's Hand in the Gospel. But because this par-

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doning Act of the Gospel doth forgive none but those that repent and believe, and so return to God, and to sincere Obedience for the time to come; therefore the next Accusation will be, that *we did not perform these Conditions of Forgiveness; and therefore being Unbelievers, Impenitent and Rebels against the Redeemer, we have no right to Pardon, but by the Sentence of the Gospel are liable to a greater Punishment for this Contempt of Christ and Grace.* This Accusation is either *true* or *false*: where it is *true*, God and Conscience, who speak the Truth, may well be said to be the Accusers: Where it is *false*, it can be only the Work of Satan the malicious Adversary, who, as we may see in *Job*'s Case, will not stick to bring a false Accusation.

If any think that the Accuser will not do so vain a Work, at least they may see that *potentially* this is the Accusation that lieth against us, and which we must be justified against. For all *Justification* implieth an *actual* or *potential Accusation.*

He that is truly accused of final Impenitency, or Unbelief, or Rebellion, hath no other Defence to make, but must needs be condemned.

He that is falsly accused of such Non-performance of the Condition of Grace, must deny the Accusation, and plead his own personal Righteousness as against that Accusation, and produce that Faith, Repentance and sincere Obedience and Perseverance, by which he fulfilled that Condition, and so is *Evangelically Righteous* in himself, and therefore hath part in the Blood of Christ, which is instead of a *Legal Righteousness* to him in all things else, as having procured him a Pardon of all his Sins, and a Right to everlasting Glory.

And thus we must then be justified by Christ's Satisfaction only against the Accusation of being *Sinners in general*, and of deserving God's Wrath for the Breach of the Law of Works; but we must be justified by our Faith, Repentance and sincere Obedience it self, against the Accusation of being *Impenitent, Unbelievers*

and Rebels againſt Chriſt, and having not performed the Condition of the Promiſe, and ſo having no part in Chriſt and his Benefits.

So that in ſum you ſee that the Cauſe of the Day will be to enquire, whether being all known Sinners, we have accepted of Chriſt upon his Terms, and ſo have Right in him and his Benefits or not? whether they have forſaken this vain World for him, and loved him ſo faithfully, that they have manifeſted it, in parting with theſe things at his Command? And this is the meaning of *Mat.* 25. where the Enquiry is made to be, whether they have fed and viſited him in his Members or not? that is, whether they have ſo far loved him as their Redeemer, and God by him, as that they have manifeſted this to his Members according to Opportunity, though it coſt them the Hazard or Loſs of all; ſeeing Danger, and Labour, and Coſt are fitter to expreſs Love by than empty Compliments and bare Profeſſions.

Whether it be particularly enquired after, or only taken for granted that Men are *Sinners*, and have deſerved Death according to the *Law of Works*, and that Chriſt hath ſatisfied by his Death, is all one as to the matter in hand, ſeeing God's Enquiry is but the Diſcovery and Conviction of us. But the laſt Queſtion which muſt decide the Controverſy will be, whether we have performed the Condition of the Goſpel?

I have the rather alſo ſaid all this, to ſhew you in what ſenſe theſe Words are taken in the Text, that *every Man ſhall be judged according to what he hath done in the Fleſh, whether it be good or bad.* Though every Man be judged *worthy* of Death for ſinning, yet every Man ſhall not be judged *to die* for it, and no Man ſhall be judged *worthy* of Life *for* his good Works: It is therefore according to the Goſpel, as the Rule of Judgment, that this is meant. They that have repented and believed, and returned to *true*, though *imperfect* Obedience, ſhall be judged to everlaſting Life,

Life, *according* to these Works; not because these Works *deserve* it, but because the *free Gift in the Gospel* through the Blood of Christ, doth make these things the *Condition* of our possessing it. They that have lived and died Impenitent, Unbelievers and Rebels against Christ, shall be judged to everlasting Punishment, *because* they have *deserved* it both by their Sin in *general* against the Law, and by these Sins in *special* against the Gospel. This is called *the Merit of the Cause*, that is, what is a Man's *Due* according to the true meaning of the Law, though the Due may be by free Gift. And thus you see what will be the Cause of the Day, and the Matter to be enquired after and decided as to our Life or Death.

VIII. The next Point in our Method is, to shew you, *What will be the Evidence of the Cause?*

Answ. There is a fivefold Evidence among Men. 1. When the Fact is notorious. 2. The Knowledg of an unsuspected competent Judg. 3. The Parties Confession. 4. Witness. 5. Instruments and visible Effects of the Action. All these Evidences will be at hand, and any one of them sufficient for the Conviction of the guilty Person at that Day.

1. As the Sins of *all Men*, so the *Impenitency* and *Rebellion* of the *Wicked* was notorious, or at least will be then. For though some play the Hypocrites, and hide the Matter from the World and themselves, yet God shall open their Hearts and former Lives to themselves, and to the view of all the World. He shall set their Sins in Order before them, so that it shall be utterly in vain to deny or excuse them. If any Men will then think to make their Cause as good to God as they can now do to us, that are not able to see their Hearts, they will be foully mistaken. Now they can say they have as good Hearts as the best: then God will bring them out in the Light, and shew them to themselves and all the World, whether they were good or bad. Now they will face us down that they do truly repent,

repent, and they obey God as well as they can; but God that knoweth the Deceivers will then undeceive them. We cannot now make Men acquainted with their own unsanctified Hearts, nor convince them that have not true Faith, Repentance or Obedience, but God will convince them of it; they can find Shifts and false Answers to put off a *Minister* with, but *God* will not so be shifted off. Let *us* preach as plainly to them as we can, and do all that ever we are able to acquaint them with the Impenitency and Unholiness of their own Heart, and the Necessity of a new Heart and Life, yet we cannot do it, but they will believe whether we will or not, that the old Heart will serve the turn. But how easily will *God* make them know the contrary? *We* plead with them in the dark, for though we have the Candle of the Gospel in our hands when we come to shew them their Corruption, yet they shut their Eyes and are wilfully blind; but *God* will open their Eyes whether they will or not, not by *holy Illumination*, but by *forced Conviction*; and then he will plead with them as in the open Light. *See here thy own unholy Soul; canst thou now say thou didst love me above all? canst thou deny but thou didst love this World before me, and serve thy Flesh and Lusts, though I told thee if thou didst so thou shouldst die? Look upon thy own Heart now, and see whether it be an holy or an unholy Heart, a spiritual or a fleshly Heart, a heavenly or an earthly Heart. Look now upon all the Course of thy Life, and see whether thou didst live to me, or to the World and thy Flesh.* O how easily will God convince Men then of the very Sins of their Thoughts, and in their secret Closets, when they thought that no Witness could have discloſed them! Therefore it's said that the Books shall be opened, and the Dead judged out of the Books, *Rev.* 20. 12. *Dan.* 7. 10.

The second Evidence will be *the Knowledg of the Judg.* If the *Sinner* would not be *convinced*, yet it is sufficient that the *Judg* knoweth the Cause; God needeth no farther Witness, he saw thee committing Adultery in secret,

secret, Lying, Stealing, Forswearing in secret. If you do not know thine own Heart to be unholy, 'tis enough that God knoweth it. If you have the Face to say, *Lord, when did we see thee hungry?* &c. *Mat.* 25. 44. yet God will make good the Charge against thee, and there needeth no more Testimony than his own. Can foolish Sinners think to lie hid or escape at that Day, that will now sin *wilfully before their Judg?* that know every Day that their *Judg* is *looking* on them, while they forget him, and give up themselves to the World, and yet go on even under his Eye, as if to his Face they dared him to punish them?

3. The third Evidence will be, *the Sinners Confession* God will force their own Consciences to witness against them, and their own Tongues to confess the Accusation. If they do at first excuse it, he will leave them speechless, yea and condemning themselves before they have done.

O what a difference between their Language now and then! *Now* we cannot tell them of their Sin and Misery, but they either tell us of our own Faults, or bid us look to our selves, or deny or excuse their Fault, or make light of it: but *then* their own Tongues shall confess them, and cry out of the wilful Folly that they committed, and lay a heavier Charge upon them than we can now do. *Now* if we tell them that we are afraid they are unregenerate, and lest their Hearts are not truly set upon God, they will tell us they hope to be saved with such Hearts as they have: But *then*, O how they will confess the Folly and Falseness of their own Hearts! You may see a little of their Case even in despairing Sinners on Earth, how far they are from denying or excusing their Sins. *Judas* cries out, *I have sinned in betraying innocent Blood*, Mat. 27. 4. out of their own Mouth shall they be judged. That very Tongue that now excuseth their Sin, will in their Torments be their great Accuser. For God will have it so to be.

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4. The fourth Evidence will be the *Witneſs of others.* O how many thouſand Witneſſes might there be produced, were there need, to convince the guilty Soul at that Day!

1. All the Miniſters of Chriſt that ever preached to them, or warned them, will be ſufficient Witneſſes againſt them; *we muſt needs* teſtify that we preached to them the Truth of the Goſpel, and they would not believe it. We preached to them the Goodneſs of God, yet they ſet not their Hearts upon him; we ſhewed them their Sin, and they were not humbled: we told them of the danger of an unregenerate State, and they did not regard us: we acquainted them with the abſolute Neceſſity of Holineſs, but they made light of all: we let them know the Deceitfulneſs of their Hearts, and the need of a cloſe and faithful Examination, but they would not beſtow an Hour in ſuch a Work, nor ſcarce once be afraid of being miſtaken and miſcarrying. We let them know the Vanity of this World, and yet they would not forſake it, no not for Chriſt and the Hopes of Glory: we told them of the everlaſting Felicity they might attain, but they would not ſet themſelves to ſeek it.

What we ſhall think of it *then* the Lord knows, but ſurely it ſeemeth now to us a matter of very ſad Conſideration, that we muſt be brought in as Witneſſes againſt the Souls of our Neighbours and Friends in the Fleſh. Thoſe whom we now unfeignedly love, and would do any thing that we were able to do for their good, whoſe Welfare is dearer to us than all worldly Enjoyments. Alas, that we muſt be forced to teſtify to their Faces for their Condemnation! Ah Lord, with what a Heart muſt a poor Miniſter ſtudy, when he conſidereth this, that all the Words that he is ſtudying muſt be brought in for a Witneſs againſt many of his Hearers! with what an Heart muſt a Miniſter preach when he remembreth that all the Words that he is ſpeaking muſt condemn many, if not moſt of his Hearers? Do we de-

ſire

fire this sad Fruit of our Labours? No, we may say with the Prophet, *Jer.* 17. 16. *I have not desired the woful Day thou knowest:* No, if we desired it, we would not do so much to prevent it, we would not study, and preach, and pray, and intreat Men, that if it were possible we might not be put on such a Task. And doubtless it should make every honest Minister study hard, and pray hard, and intreat hard, and stoop low to Men, and be earnest with Men in season and out of season, that if it may be they may not be the Condemners of their Peoples Souls. But if Men will not hear, and there be no remedy, who can help it? Christ himself came not into the World to condemn Men, but to save them, and yet he will condemn those that will not yield to his saving Work: God takes no Pleasure in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he repent and return and live, *Ezek.* 18. 23, 32. and yet he will rejoice over those to do them hurt, and destroy them that will not return, *Deut.* 28. 63. And if we must be put on such a Work, he will make us like-minded. The Holy Ghost tells us that the Saints shall judg the World, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2, 3. and if they must judg, they will judg as God judgeth; you cannot blame us for it, Sinners: we now warn you of it before-hand, and if you will not prevent it, blame not us but your selves. Alas, we are not our own Masters! As we now speak not to you in our own Names, so then we may not do what we list our selves, or if we might, our Wills will be as God's Will. God will make us judg you and witness against you. Can we absolve you when the righteous God will condemn you? when God is against you, whose side would you have us be of? we must be either against *God* or *you*; and can you think that we should be for any one against our Maker and Redeemer? we must either condemn the Sentence of Jesus Christ or condemn you: and is not there more reason to condemn you than him? Can we have any Mercy on you, when he that made you will not save you, and he that formed you will shew

shew you no Merey? *Isa.*27.11. yea when he that died for you will condemn you, shall we be more merciful than God? But alas! if we should be so fooliſh and unjuſt, what good would it do you? If we would be False-witneſſes and partial Judges, it would not save you; we are not juſtified if we abſolve our ſelves, 1 *Cor.*4.4. how unable then ſhall we be againſt God's Sentence to juſtify you? If all the World ſhould ſay you were holy and penitent, when God knows you were unholy and impenitent, it will do you no good. You pray every Day that *his Will* may be done, and it will be done: It will be done *upon* you, becauſe it was not done *by* you. What would you have *us* ſay, if God ask us, *Did you tell this Sinner of the need of Chriſt, of the Glory of the World to come, and the Vanity of this?* Should we lie and ſay we did not? What ſhould we ſay if he ask us, *Did not you tell them the Miſery of their natural State, and what would become of them if they were not made new?* Would you have us lie to God, and ſay we did not? Why if we *did not*, your Blood will be required at our hands, *Ezek.* 33.6. and 3.18. and would you have us bring your Blood upon our own Heads by a Lie? yea, and to do you no good, when we know that Lies will not prevail with God? No, no, Sinners; we muſt unavoidably teſtify to the Confuſion of your Faces; if God ask us, we muſt bear Witneſs againſt you and ſay, *Lord, we did what we could according to our weak Abilities to reclaim them: indeed our own Thoughts of everlaſting Things were ſo low, and our Hearts ſo dull, that we muſt confeſs we did not follow them ſo cloſe, nor ſpeak ſo earneſtly as we ſhould have done: we did not cry ſo loud, or lift up our Voice as a Trumpet to awaken them* (Iſa. 58. 1.) *we confeſs we did not ſpeak to them with ſuch melting Compaſſion, and with ſuch Streams of Tears beſeech them to regard, as a Matter of ſuch great Concernment ſhould have been ſpoken with; we did not fall on our Knees to them, and ſo earneſtly beg of them for the Lord's ſake, to have Mercy upon their own Souls as we ſhould have done. But yet we told them the Meſſage of God,*

and

and we studied to speak it to them as plainly and as piercingly as we could. Fain we would have convinced them of their Sin and Misery, but we could not: fain we would have drawn them to the Admiration of Christ, but they made light of it, Mat. 22. 5. we would fain have brought them to the Contempt of this vain World, and to set their Mind on the World to come, but we could not. Some Compassion thou knowest, Lord, we had to their Souls, many a weeping and groaning Hour we have had in secret, because they would not hear and obey, and some sad Complaints we have made over them in publick: we told them that they must shortly die and come to Judgment, and that this World would deceive them and leave them in the Dust: we told them that the time was at hand when nothing but Christ would do them good, and nothing but the Favour of God would be sufficient for their Happiness, but we could never get them to lay it to heart. Many a time did we intreat them to think soberly of this Life and the Life to come, and to compare them together with the Faith of Christians and the Reason of Men, but they would not do it: many a time did we intreat them but to take now and then an Hour in secret to consider who made them, and for what he had made them, and why they were sent into this World, and what their Business here is, and whither they are going, and how it will go with them at their latter End: but we could never get most of them to spend one Hour in serious Thoughts of these weighty Matters. Many a time did we intreat them to try whether they were Regenerate or not, whether Christ and his Spirit were in them or not, whether their Souls were brought back to God by Sanctification; but they would not try: we did beseech them to make sure Work, and not leave such a Matter as everlasting Joy or Torment to a bold and mad Adventure, but we could not prevail. We intreated them to lay all other Businesses aside a little while in the World, and to enquire by the Direction of the Word of God, what would become of them in the World to come, and judg themselves before God came to judg them, seeing they had the Law and Rule of Judgment before them; but their Minds were blinded, and their Hearts were hardned.

hardned, and the Profit, and Pleasure, and Honour of this World did either stop their Ears, or quickly steal away their Hearts, so that we could never get them to a sober Consideration, nor ever win their Hearts to God.

This will be the Witness that many a hundred Ministers of the Gospel must give in against the Souls of their People at that Day. Alas, that ever you should cast this upon us! For the Lord's sake, Sirs, pity your poor Teachers if you pity not your selves. We had rather go 1000 Miles for you, we had rather be scorned and abused for your sakes, we had rather lay our Hands under your Feet, and beseech you on our Knees with Tears, were we able, than be put on such Work as this. It is *you* that will do it if it be done. We had rather follow you from House to House, and teach and exhort you, if you will but hear us and accept of our Exhortation. Your Souls are pretious in our Eyes, for we know they were so in the Eyes of Christ, and therefore we are loth to see this Day; we were once in your Case, and therefore know what it is to be blind, and careless and carnal as you are, and therefore would fain obtain your Deliverance. But if you *will* not hear, but we *must* accuse you, and we *must* condemn you, the Lord judg between you and us. For we can witness that it was full sore against our Wills. We have been faulty indeed in doing no more for you, and not following you with restless Importunity, (the Good Lord forgive us) but yet we have not betrayed you by silence.

2. All those that fear God, that have lived among ungodly Men, will also be sufficient Witnesses against them. Alas, they must be put upon the same Work, which is very unpleasant to their Thoughts, as Ministers are! They must witness before the Lord that they did as Friends and Neighbours admonish them; that they gave them a good Example, and endeavoured to walk in Holiness before them. But alas, the most did but mock them, and call them Puritans and precise Fools, and they made more ado than needs for their Salvation:

Salvation: They must be forced to testify, [Lord, we would fain have drawn them with us to hear the Word and to read it, and to pray in their Families, and to sanctify the holy Day, and take such happy Opportunities for their Souls; but we could not get them to it: we did in our Places what we were able to give them the Example of a godly Conversation, and they did but deride us, they were readier to mark every slip of our Lives, and to observe all our Infirmities, and catch at any Accusation that was against us, than to follow us in any Work of holy Obedience, or Care for their everlasting Peace.] The Lord knows it is a most heavy thing to consider now that poor Neighbours must be fain to come in against those they love so dearly, and by their Testimony to judg them to Perdition. O heavy Case to think of, that a Master must witness against his own Servant! Yea, a Husband against his own Wife, and a Wife against her Husband; yea, Parents against their own Children, and say, [Lord I taught them thy Word, but they would not learn; I told them what would come on it if they returned not to thee, I brought them to Sermons, and I prayed with them and for them. I frequently minded them of these everlasting Things, and of this dreadful Day which they now see. But youthful Lusts and the Temptations of the Flesh and the Devil led them away, and I could never get them throughly and soundly to lay it to their Hearts.] O you that are Parents, and Friends, and Neighbours, in the Fear of God bestir you now, that you may not be put to this at that Day of Judgment. O give them no rest, take no nay of them till you have perswaded their Hearts from this World to God, lest you be put to be their Condemners: It must be *now* that you must prevent it, or else *never*; *now* while you are with them, while you and they are in the Flesh together, which will be but a little while: Can you but now prevail with them, all will be well, and you may meet them joyfully before the Lord.

3. Another Witneſs that will teſtify againſt the Ungodly at that Day, will be their ſinful Companions, thoſe that drew them into Sin, or were drawn by them, or joined with them in it. O little do poor Drunkards think, when they ſit merrily in an Ale-houſe, that one of them muſt bear witneſs againſt another, and condemn one another! If they thought of this, methinks it ſhould make them have leſs Delight in that Company: thoſe that now join with you in Wickedneſs, ſhall then be forced to witneſs, [I confeſs, Lord, I did hear him ſwear and curſe, I heard him deride thoſe that feared the Lord, and make a Jeſt of a holy Life: I ſaw him in the Ale-houſe when he ſhould be hearing the Word of God, or reading, or calling upon God, and preparing for this Day: I joined with him in fleſhly Delights, in abuſing thy Creature and our own Bodies.] Sinners, look your Companions in the Face the next time you are with them, and remember this that I now ſay; that thoſe Men ſhall give in Evidence againſt you, that now are your Aſſociates in all your Mirth. Little thinketh the Fornicator and luſtful Wanton, that their ſinful Mates muſt then bear Witneſs of that which they thought the Dark had concealed, and tell their Shame before all the World. But this muſt be the Fruit of Sin. It's meet that they who encouraged one another in Sin, ſhould condemn one another for it. And marvel not at it, for they ſhall be forced to it whether they will or no; Light will not then be hid: They may think to have ſome eaſe to their Conſciences, by accuſing and condemning others. When *Adam* is queſtioned for his Sin, he preſently accuſeth the Woman, *Gen.* 3. 12. when *Judas* his Conſcience was awakned, he runs to the Phariſees with the Money that drew him to it, and they caſt it back in his own Face, *See thou to it, what is that to us? Mat.* 27. 4, 5, 6. O the cold Comfort that Sinners will have at that Day, and the little Pleaſure that they will find in remembring their evil Ways! *Now* when a Fornicator or a Worldling, or a merry

merry voluptuous Man is grown old, and cannot act all his Sin again, he takes Pleasure in remembring and telling others of his former Folly; what he once was, and what he did, and the merry Hours that he had: but *then* when Sinners are come to themselves a little more, they will remember and tell one another of these things with another Heart. O that they did but know now how these things will then affect them!

4. Another Witness that will then rise up against them, will be the very Devils that tempted them: They that did purposely draw them to Sin, that they might draw them to Torment for Sin: They can witness that you hearkned to their Temptations, when you would not hearken to God's Exhortations: They can witness that you obeyed them in working Iniquity. But because you may think the Accuser's Testimony is not to be taken, I will not stand on this. Though it is not nothing where God knoweth it to be true.

5. The very Angels of God also may be Witnesses against the Wicked; therefore are we advised in Scripture not to sin before them, *Eccl.* 5. 6. 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. 1 *Tim.* 5. 21. I charge thee before the Elect Angels, *&c.* They can testify that they would have been ministring Spirits for their good, when the Wicked rather chose to be Slaves to the Spirit of Maliciousness. The holy Angels of God do many a time stand by you when you are sinning: They see you when you see not them; they are imployed by God in some sort for your good, as well as we. And as it is the Grief of Ministers that their Labours succeed not, so may we suppose that according to their State and Nature it is theirs. For they that rejoice in Heaven at the Conversion of one Sinner, may be said to sorrow, or to lose those Joys when you refuse to be converted. These noble Spirits, these holy and glorious Attendants of Christ that shall wait upon him to Judgment, will be Witnesses against rebellious Sinners to their Confu-

sion. Sirs, you have all in you naturally a Fear of Spirits and invisible Powers: Fear them aright, lest hearkning to the deceiving Spirits, and refusing the Help of the Angels of God, and wilfully sinning before their Faces, you should cause them at that Day, to the Terror of your Souls, to stand forth as Witnesses against you to your Condemnation.

6. Conscience it self will be a most effectual Witness against the Wicked at that Day. I before told you it will be a Discerner, and force them to a Confession: But a farther Office it hath, even to *witness* against them. If none else in the World had known of their secret Sins, Conscience will say, I was acquainted with them.

7. The Spirit of Christ can witness against the Ungodly that he oft moved them to repent and return, and they rejected his Motions; that he spoke to their Hearts in secret, and oft set in with the Minister, and often minded them of their Case, and perswaded them to God; but they resisted, quenched and grieved the Spirit, *Acts* 7.51. As the Spirit witnesseth with the Spirits of the Righteous that they are the Children of God, *Rom.* 8. 16. so doth he witness with the Conscience of the Wicked that they were Children of Rebellion, and therefore are justly Children of Wrath. This Spirit will not alway strive with Men: at last being vexed, it will prove their Enemy, and rise up against them, *Gen.* 6. 3. *Isa.* 63. 10. If you will needs *grieve it* now, it will *grieve you* then. Were it not a Spirit of *Grace*, and were it not free Mercy that it came to offer you, the Repulse would not have been so condemning, nor the Witness of this Spirit so heavy at the last. But it was the Spirit of Jesus, that came with recovering Grace, which you resisted: And though the Wages of every Sin is Death, yet you will find that it will cost you somewhat more to reject this Salvation, than to break the Creator's Law of Works. Kindness, *such* Kindness will not be rejected at easy Rates.

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Many a good Motion is now made by the Spirit o the Heart of a Sinner, which he doth not ſo much as nce obſerve; and therefore doth not now remember em. But *then* they ſhall be brought to his Remembrance ith a witneſs. Many a thouſand ſecret Motions to epentance, to Faith, to a holy Life, will be *then* ſet efore the Eyes of the poor, unpardoned, trembling inner, which he had quite forgotten: And the Spi- it of God ſhall teſtify to his Confuſion. [At ſuch Sermon I perſwaded thy Heart to repent, and thou ouldſt not; at ſuch a time I ſhewed thee the Evil of ny Sin, and perſwaded thee to have forſaken it, but ou wouldſt not; I minded thee in thy ſecret Thoughts, f the nearneſs of Judgment, and the *certainty* and *weight* f everlaſting things, the need of Chriſt, and Faith, nd Holineſs, and of the danger of Sinning; but thou idſt drown all my Motions in the Cares and Pleaſures f the World. Thou harkenedſt rather to the Devil han to me; the ſenſual Inclinations of thy Fleſh did revail againſt the ſtrongeſt Arguments that I uſed: hough I ſhewed Reaſons, undeniable Reaſons, from ny Creator, from thy Redeemer, from Nature, from race, from Heaven and from Hell; yet all would not much as *ſtop* thee, much leſs *turn* thee, but thou *ouldeſt* go on; thou *wouldeſt* follow thy Fleſh, and now t it pay thee the Wages of thy Folly; thou *wouldeſt* e thy own Guide, and take thine own Courſe, and ow take what thou getteſt by it.]

Poor Sinners, I beſeech you in the Fear of God, the ext time you have any ſuch Motions from the Spirit of od, to repent, and believe, and break off your Sins, nd the Occaſions of them: conſider then what a Mer- is ſet before you, and how it will confound you at e Day of Judgment, to have all theſe Motions brought againſt you, and that the Spirit of Grace it ſelf ould be your Condemner! Alas, that Men ſhould hooſe their own Deſtruction, and wilfully chooſe it! nd that the Foreknowledg of theſe things ſhould not ove them to relent.

So much concerning the Witneſs that will be brought in againſt the Sinner.

5. The fifth Evidence that will be given againſt the Sinner will be, *The Inſtruments and Effects.* You know among Men, if a Man be found murdered by the high-way, and you are found ſtanding by with a bloody Sword in your Hand; eſpecially if there were a former Diſſenſion between you, it will be an Evidence that will prove a *ſtrong Preſumption* that you were the Murderer; but if the Fact be certain by other Evidence, then many ſuch things may be brought for aggravation of the Fault.

So a twofold Evidence will be brought againſt the Sinner from theſe things. One to prove him guilty of the Fact, the other to aggravate the Fault, and prove that his Sin was very great.

For the former. 1. The very Creatures which Sinners abuſed to ſin, may be brought in againſt them to their Conviction and Condemnation. For though theſe Creatures ſhall be conſumed with the laſt deſtroying Fire, which ſhall conſume all the World; yet ſhall they have a Being in the Memory of the Sinner, (an *eſſe Cognitum*;) the very Wine or Ale, or other Liquor which was abuſed to Drunkenneſs, may witneſs againſt the Drunkard. The ſweet Morſels by which the Glutton did pleaſe his Appetite, and all the good Creatures of God which he luxuriouſly devoured, may witneſs againſt him, *Luke* 16. 19, 25. He that fared deliciouſly every Day in this Life, was told by *Abraham* when he was dead, and his Soul in Hell, [Remember that thou in thy Life-time receiveſt thy good things, and likewiſe *Lazarus* evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.] Though their ſweet Morſels and Cups are paſt and gone, yet muſt they be remembred at Judgment and in Hell. [Remember Son] ſaith *Abraham*; Yea, and *remember* he muſt whether he will or no; long was the Glutton in ſinning, and many a pleaſant bit did he taſte: and ſo many Evidences of

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his Sin will lie against him, and the Sweetness will then be turned into Gall.

The very Clothing and Ornaments by which proud Persons did manifest their Pride, will be sufficient Evidence against them: as his being clothed with Purple and fine Linen, is mentioned *Luke* 16. 19.

The very Lands, and Goods, and Houses of Worldlings will be an Evidence against them: Their Gold and Silver, which the Covetous do now prefer before the everlasting Riches with Christ, will be an Evidence against them: *James* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Go to now, ye rich Men, weep and howl for your Miseries that shall come upon you. Your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments Moth-eaten; your Gold and your Silver is cankered, and the Rust of them shall be a* Witness *against you, and shall eat your Flesh as it were Fire; ye have heaped Treasure together for the last Days. Behold, the Hire of the Labourers, which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth; and the Cries of them which have reaped, are entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbath. Ye have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter.* O that Worldlings would well consider this one Text; and therein observe whether a Life of Earthly Pleasure and fulness of worldly Glory and Gallantry, be as desirable as they imagine, and to what Time and Purpose they now lay up their Treasures; and how they must hear of these things hereafter; and what effect the review of their jovial Days will have upon their miserable condemned Souls.

2. The very Circumstances of Time, Place, and the like, may evidence against his Condemnation. The Drunkard shall remember in such an Ale-house, I was so oft drunk, and in such a Tavern I wasted my time. The Adulterer and Fornicator shall remember the very Time, the Place, the Room, the Bed, where they committed Wickedness. The Thief and Deceiver will remember the Time, Place, and the Persons they wrong-

ed, and the things which they robbed or deceived them of. The Worldling will remember the Buſineſs which he preferred before the Service of God; the worldly Matters which had more of his Heart than his Maker and Redeemer had; the Work which he was doing when he ſhould have been praying or reading, or Catechiſing his Family, or thinking ſoberly of his latter End. A thouſand of theſe will then come into his Mind, and be as ſo many Evidences againſt him to his Condemnation.

3. The very Effects alſo of Mens Sins will be an Evidence againſt them. The Wife and Children of a Drunkard are impoveriſhed by his Sin; his Family and the Neighbourhood is diſquieted by him. Theſe will be ſo many Evidences againſt him. So will the Abuſe of his own Reaſon, the enticing of others to the ſame Sin, and hardning them by his Example.

One covetous unmerciful Landlord doth keep an hundred, or many hundred Perſons or Families in ſo great Neceſſities, and Care and Labour, that they are tempted by it to overpaſs the Service of God, as having ſcarce time for it, or any Room for it in their troubled Thoughts; all theſe miſerable Families and Perſons, and all the Souls that are undone by this Temptation, will be ſo many Evidences againſt ſuch Oppreſſors.

Yea, the Poor whom they have neglected to relieve when they might; the Sick whom they have neglected to viſit when they might, will all witneſs then againſt the Unmerciful, *Mat.* 25.

The many ignorant, worldly, careleſs Sinners, that have periſhed under an idle and unfaithful Miniſter, will be ſo many Witneſſes againſt him to his Condemnation! They may then cry out againſt him to his Face, [I was ignorant, Lord, and he never did ſo much as teach me, catechiſe me, nor tell me of theſe things; I was careleſs, and minded the World, and he let me go on quietly, and was as careleſs as I, had never plainly and faithfully warned me, to waken me from my Security.] And

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so their Blood will be required at his hands, though themselves also shall perish in their Sins, *Ezek.*33.7,8.

2. And as these Evidences will convince Men of Sin, so there are many more which will convince them of the *greatness* of their Sin. And these are so many, that it would too much lengthen my Discourse to stand on them. A few I shall briefly touch.

1. The very Mercy of God in *creating* Men, in giving and continuing their *Being* to them, will be an Evidence for the Aggravation of their Sin against him. What, will you abuse him by whom it is that you are Men? will you speak to his Dishonour that giveth you your Speech? will you live to his Dishonour who giveth you your Lives? will you wrong him by his own Creatures? and neglect him without whom you cannot subsist?

2. The Redemption of Men by the Lord Jesus Christ, will be an Evidence to the exceeding Aggravation of their Sins. You sinned against the Lord that bought you, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. When the Feast was prepared, and all things were ready, you made light of it, and found Excuses and would not come, *Mat.* 22. 4, 5, 6. *Luke* 14. 17, 18. Must Christ redeem you by so dear a Price from Sin and Misery, and yet will you continue the Servants of Sin, and prefer your Slavery before your Freedom, and choose to be Satan's Drudges, rather than to be the Servants of God? The Sorrows and Sufferings that Christ underwent for you, will then prove the Increase of your own Sorrows. As a neglected Redeemer it is that he will condemn you. And then you would be glad that it were but true Doctrine, that Christ never died for you, that you might not be condemned for refusing a Redeemer, and sinning against him that shed his Blood for you. How deeply will his Wounds then wound your Consciences? You will then remember that to this end he both died, rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the Dead and the Living: And that he therefore died for

all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live to themſelves, but to him that died for them and roſe again; *Rom.* 14. 9. 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. *Mat.* 28. 18, 19, 20. 1 *Pet.* 1. 17, 18. You will then underſtand that you were not your own, but were bought with a Price; and therefore ſhould have glorified him that bought you with your Bodies and Spirits, becauſe they were his, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. This one Aggravation of your Sin will make you doubly and remedileſly miſerable, that you trod under foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith you were ſanctified, an unholy thing, *Heb.* 10. 26, 27, 28, 29. and crucified to your ſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to open Shame, *Heb.* 6. 5, 6.

3. Moreover, all the perſonal Mercies which they received, will be ſo many Evidences for the Condemnation of the Ungodly. The very Earth that bore them, and yielded them its Fruits, while they themſelves are unfruitful to God. The Air which they breathed in, the Food which nouriſh'd them, the Clothes which cover'd them, the Houſes which they dwelt in, the Beaſts that laboured for them, and all the Creatures that died for their Uſe: All theſe may riſe up againſt them to their Condemnation. And the Judg may thus expoſtulate with them, [Did all theſe Mercies deſerve no more Thanks? Should you not have ſerved him that ſo liberally maintained you? God thought not all theſe too good for you, and did you think your Hearts and Services too good for him? He ſerved yours with the weary Labours of your fellow-Creatures; and ſhould you have grudged to bear his eaſy Yoak? They were your Slaves and Drudges, and you refuſed to be his free Servants and his Sons: They ſuffered Death to feed your Bodies, and you would not ſuffer the ſhort Forbearance of a little forbidden fleſhly Pleaſure, for the ſake of him that made you and redeemed you.]

O how many thousand Mercies of God will then be reviewed by those that neglected them, to the Horror of their Souls, when they shall be upbraided by the Judg with their base Requital! All the Deliverances from Sickness and from Danger; all the Honours, and Privileges, and other Commodities which so much contented them, will then be God's Evidences to shame them and confound them. On this Supposition doth the Apostle reprove such, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5, 6. *Despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent Heart, treasurest up unto thy self Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, who will render to every Man according to his Deeds.*

4. Moreover, all the Means which God used for the Recovery of Sinners in the Day of their Visitation, will rise up against impenitent Souls in Judgment, to their Condemnation. You can hear Sermons carelessly and sleepily now: but O that you would consider how the Review of them will then awake you! You now make light of the Warnings of God and Man, and of all the wholesom Advice that is given you, but God will not then make light of your Contempt. O what cutting Questions will they be to the Hearts of the Ungodly, when all the means that were used for their Good, are brought to their Remembrance on one side, and the Temptations that drew them to Sin on the other Side, and the Lord shall plead his Cause with their Consciences, and say, [Was I so hard a Master, or was my Work so unreasonable, or was my Wages so contemptible that no Perswasions could draw you into my Service? Was Satan so good a Master, or was his Work so honest and profitable, or was his Wages so desirable, that you would be so easily perswaded to do as he would have you? Was there more perswading Reason in his Allurements and Deceits, than in all my holy Words, and all the powerful Sermons that you heard, or all the

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faithful Admonitions you received; or all the good Examples of the Righteous, or in all the Works of God which you beheld? Was not a Reaſon fetch'd from the Love of God, from the Evil of Sin, the Blood of Chriſt, the Judgment to come, the Glory promiſed, the Torments threatned, as forcible with you, and as good in your Eyes to draw you to Holineſs, as a Reaſon from a little fleſhly Delight or worldly Gain, to draw you to be unholy?]

In the Name of God, Sinners, I intreat you to bethink your ſelves in time, how you will ſufficiently anſwer ſuch Queſtions as theſe. You ſhould have ſeen God in every Creature that you beheld, and have read your Duty in all his Works; what can you look upon above you, or below you, or round about you, which might not have ſhewed you ſo much of the Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Greatneſs of your Maker, as ſhould have convinced you that it was your Duty to be devoted to his Will? and yet you have his written Word that ſpeaks plainer than all theſe; and will you deſpiſe them all? will you not ſee ſo great a Light? will you not hear ſo loud and conſtant Calls? ſhall God and his Miniſters ſpeak in vain? And can you think that you ſhall not hear of this again, and pay for it one Day? you have the Bible and other good Books by you; why do you not read them? You have Miniſters at hand; why do you not go to them, and earneſtly ask them, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* and intreat them to teach you the Way to Life: You have ſome Neighbours that fear God; why do you not go to them, and take their good Advice, and imitate them in the Fear of God, and in a holy Diligence for your Souls? Now is the time for you to beſtir your ſelves; Life and Death are before you. You have Gales of Grace to further your Voyage: There are more for you than againſt you. God will help you: his Spirit will help you: his Miniſters will help you: every good Chriſtian will help you: the Angels themſelves will help you, if you will reſolvedly

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ſet your ſelves to the Work; and yet will you not ſtir? Patience is waiting on you: Mercies are enticing you: Scourges are driving you: Judgment ſtayeth for you: The Lights of God ſtand burning by you to direct you: And yet will you not ſtir, but lie in Darkneſs? And do you think you ſhall not hear of this? Do you think this will not one Day coſt you dear?

IX. The ninth part of our Work is to ſhew you, *What are thoſe frivolous Excuſes by which the Unrighteous may then indeavour their Defence?*

Having already ſhewed you what the Defence muſt be, that muſt be ſufficient to our Juſtification;

If any firſt demand, Whether the Evidence of their Sin will not ſo overwhelm the Sinner, that he will be ſpeechleſs and paſt excuſe? I anſwer, Before God hath done with him, he will be ſo; but it ſeems at firſt his dark Underſtanding, and partial corrupted Conſcience will ſet him upon a vain Defence. For *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. Chriſt telleth us, that [Many will ſay to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name have caſt out Devils, and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? And then will I profeſs to them, I never knew you, Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.] And in *Mat.* 25. 11. the fooliſh Virgins cry, [Lord, Lord, open to us.] And *ver.* 44. [Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or thirſt, or a Stranger, or Naked, or Sick, or in Priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee?] And *verſ.* 24, 25. they fear not to caſt ſome of the Cauſes of their neglect on God himſelf, [Then he which had received the one Talent came and ſaid, Lord, I knew thou art an hard Man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy Talent in the Earth; lo, there thou haſt that is thine.]

It is clear then, that Excuſes they will be ready to make, and their full Conviction will be in order after theſe Excuſes, (at leaſt as in their Minds, if not in Words) but what the particular Excuſes will be, we may partly know by theſe Scriptures which recite them, and partly by hearing what the Ungodly do now ſay for themſelves. And becauſe it is for their preſent Benefit that I now make mention of them, that they may ſee the Vanity of all ſuch Excuſes, I will mention them as I now meet with them in the Mouths of Sinners in our ordinary Diſcourſe: and theſe Excuſes are of ſeveral ſorts; ſome by which they would juſtify their Eſtate; ſome Excuſes of particular Actions; and that either in whole, or in part; ſome by which they would put by the Penalty, though they confeſs the Sin; ſome by which they lay the blame on other Men; and in ſome they would caſt it upon God himſelf. I muſt touch but ſome of them very briefly.

The firſt Excuſe. *I am not guilty of theſe things which I am accuſed of. I did love God above all, and my Neighbour as my ſelf. I did uſe the World but for Neceſſity, but God had my Heart.*

Anſw. The All-ſeeing Judg doth know the contrary, and he will make thy Conſcience know it: Look back, Man, upon thy Heart and Life: How ſeldom and how neglectfully didſt thou think of God? how coldly didſt thou worſhip him, or make any mention of him? how careleſly didſt thou ſerve him, and think much of all that thou didſt therein? Thou rather thoughteſt that his Service was making more ado than needs, and didſt grudg at thoſe that were more diligent than thy ſelf; but for the World, how heartily and how conſtantly didſt thou ſeek and ſerve it? and yet wouldſt thou now perſwade the Judg that thou didſt love God above all? He will ſhew thee thy naked Heart, and the Courſe of thy former Life, which ſhall convince thee of the contrary.

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The Second Excuse. *I lived not in any gross Sin, but only in small Infirmities; I was no Murderer, or Adulterer, or Fornicator, or Thief, nor did I deceive or wrong any, or take any thing by violence.*

Answ. Was it not a gross Sin to love the World above God, and to neglect Christ that died for thee, and never to do him one Hour's hearty Service, but meerly to seek thy carnal self, and to live to thy Flesh? God will open thine Eyes then, and shew thee a thousand gross Sins, which thou now forgettest or makest light of; and it is not only gross Sin, but all Sin, great or small, that deserveth the Wrath of God, and will certainly bring thee under it for ever, if thou have not part in Christ to relieve thee. Wo to the Man that ever he was born that must answer in his own Name for his smallest Offences!

The third Excuse. *I did it ignorantly; I knew not that there was so much required to my Salvation. I thought less ado might have served the turn: and that if I look'd to my Body, God would take care of my Soul; and that it was better to trust him what would become of me hereafter, than to trouble my Mind so much about it. Had I known better, I would have done better.*

Answ. If you knew not better, who was it long of but your self? Did God hide these things from you? Did he not tell them you in his Word as plainly as the Tongue of Man can speak, That except you were regenerate and born again, you should not enter into the Kingdom of God? *John* 3. 3, 5. That without Holiness none should see God, *Heb.* 12. 14. That you must *strive* to enter in at the strait Gate; for many shall *seek* to enter, and shall not be able, *Luke* 13. 24. That if you lived after the Flesh, you should die: and if by the Spirit you mortified the Deeds of the Body, you should live, *Rom.* 8. 13. That if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, *Rom.* 8. 9. And to be carnally minded is Death; but to be spiritually minded is Life and Peace, *Rom.* 8. 9.

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That you must not lay up for your selves a Treasure on Earth, where Rust and Moths do corrupt, and Thieves break through and steal, but must lay up for your selves a Treasure in Heaven, where Rust and Moths do not corrupt, nor Thieves break through and steal, *Mat.* 6. 19, 20. That you must seek first the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof, *Mat.* 6. 23. and not labour for the Food that perisheth, but for the Food that endureth to everlasting Life, which Christ would have given you, *John* 6. 27. That if you be risen with Christ, you must seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on Earth, *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3. Yea your very Conversation should be in Heaven, *Phil.* 3. 19, 20, 21.

What say you? Did not God tell you all this and much more; and plainly tell it you? Turn to your Bibles and see the Words, and let them witness against you.

2. And could you think with any Reason, that your Souls being so much more precious than your Bodies, you should yet do so much more for your Bodies than your Souls? could you think all the Labour of your Lives little enough for a frail Body that must lie shortly in the Dirt; and that your Immortal Souls should be no more regarded? Could you think with any Reason, that your Souls should do so much for a Life of a few Years continuance, and do no more for a Life that shall have no end?

3. And whereas you talk of *trusting God with your Souls*, you did not trust him: You did but on that Pretence, carelesly disregard them. If you trust God, shew any Word of Promise that ever he gave you to trust upon, that ever an impenitent, carnal, careless Person shall be saved: No; he hath told you enough to the contrary. And could you think that it was the Will of God that you should mind your Bodies more than your Souls, and this Life more than that to come?

Why, he hath bid you ſtrive, and run, and fight, and labour, and care, and ſeek, and uſe Violence, and all Diligence for the ſafety of your Souls, and for the Life to come: But where hath he bid you do ſo for your Bodies? No, he knew that you were prone to do too much for them; and therefore he hath bid you [Care not, and labour not] that is, Do it as if you did it not: and let your Care and Labour for earthly Things be none in compariſon of that for heavenly Things. You know God can as well maintain your Lives without your Care and Labour, as ſave your Souls without it: And yet you ſee he will not, he doth not: You muſt plough, and ſow, and reap, and threſh, for all God's Love and Care of you, and not ſay, I will let all alone and truſt God. And muſt you not much more uſe diligence in much greater Things? If you will truſt God, you muſt truſt him in his own Way, and in the uſe of his own Means.

The fourth Excuſe. *I was never brought up to Learning, I cannot ſo much as read: nor did my Parents ever teach me any of theſe things, but only ſet me about my worldly Buſineſs, and provide Food and Raiment for me: but never once told me that I had a Soul to ſave or loſe, and an everlaſting Life to provide and prepare for, and therefore I could not come to the Knowledg of them.*

Anſw. The greater is their Sin who thus neglected you. But this is no ſufficient Excuſe for you. Heaven is not prepared for the Learned only; nor will Chriſt ask you at Judgment whether you are good Scholars or not, no nor ſo much as whether you could write or read. But conſider well, Was not God's Word ſo plainly written, that the Unlearned might underſtand it? Did he not put it into the moſt familiar Stile, though he knew it would be offenſive to the proud Scholars of the World, of purpoſe that he might fit it to the Capacities of the Ignorant? And if you could not read, yet tell me, could not you have learned to read at 20 or 30 Years of Age, if you had been

been but willing to beſtow now and then an Hour to that end? Or at leaſt, did you not live near ſome that could read? and could you not have procured them to read to you, or to help you? and did you not hear theſe things read to you in the Congregation by the Miniſter, or might have done if you would? and if your Parents did neglect you in your Youth, yet when you came to a fuller uſe of Reaſon, and heard of the Matters of Salvation from God's Word, did it not concern you to have looked to your ſelves, and to have redeemed that time which you loſt in your Youth, by doubling your Diligence when you came to riper Years? The Apoſtles gathered Churches among Heathens that never heard of Chriſt before; and converted many thouſand Souls that were never once told of a Saviour, or the Way to Salvation, till they had paſt a great part of their Lives. If you loitered till the latter part of the Day, it behoved you then to have beſtirred your ſelves the more; and not to ſay, Through the Fault of my Parents, I loſt the beginning of my Life, and therefore I will loſe all; they taught me not then, and therefore I will not learn now: Have you not ſeen ſome of your Neighbours who were as ill educated as your ſelves, attain to much Knowledg afterwards by their Induſtry? and why might not you have done ſo, if you had been as induſtrious as they? May not God and Conſcience witneſs, that it was becauſe you cared not for Knowledg, and would not be at pains to get it, that you knew no more? Speak truth, Man, in the Preſence of thy Judg; was thy Heart and Mind ſet upon it? Didſt thou pray daily for it to God? Didſt thou uſe all the means thou couldſt to get it? Didſt thou attend diligently on the Word in publick, and think of what thou heardſt when thou cameſt home? Didſt thou go to the Miniſter, or to others that could teach thee, and intreat them to tell thee the Way to Salvation? Or didſt thou not rather careleſly neglect theſe Matters, and hear a Sermon as a common tale,

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even when the Minister was speaking of Heaven or of Hell? It was not then thine unavoidable Ignorance, but thy Negligence.

Yea further, answer as in the Presence of God; Didst thou obey so far as thou *didst know?* Or didst thou not rather sin against that Knowledg which thou hadst? Thou knewest that the Soul was better than the Body, and everlasting Life more to be regarded than this transitory Life; but didst thou regard it accordingly? Thou sure knewest that God was better than the World, and Heaven than Earth: at least thou wast told of it, but didst thou accordingly value him, and love him more? Thou knewest sure that there was no Salvation without Faith, and Repentance, and newness of Life, and yet they were neglected. In a word, many a thousand Sins which were committed, and Duties that were omitted against thy own Knowledg and Conscience, will marr this Excuse.

The fifth Excuse. *I lived not under a powerful Minister to tell me of these things; but where there was no preaching at all.*

Answ. And might you not have gone where a powerful Minister was, with a little pains? Yea, did not the very plain Word that you heard read, tell you of these things? and might you not have had a Bible your selves, and found them there?

The sixth Excuse. *I was a Servant, and had no time from my Labour to mind these matters; I lived with an hard Master that required all his own Work of me, but would allow me no time for the Service of God.* Or else, *I was a poor Man, and had a great Charge to look after, and with my hard Labour had much ado to live, so that I had no time for heavenly things.*

Answ. 1. Who should be first served, God or Man? What should be first sought after, Heaven or Earth? Did not Christ tell thee, *One thing is necessary? Luke* 10. 41, 42. Was it not as needful, to see that you escape Damnation, and get safe to Heaven when

when this Life is ended, as to see that you had Food and Raiment for your selves and yours?

2. Did you spend no time in Recreation, nor Idleness, nor vain talking? why might not that at least have been spent about heavenly things?

3. Could you have taken no time from your rest, or eating, or at other Intermissions? Man's Body will not endure so great Labours as have no Intermission. And why then might not Godliness have been your Ease and Recreation?

4. Or might you not have minded these things even when you were about your Labour, if you had but a Heart to them?

5. At least you might have spent the Lord's own Day in hearing, reading and pondering of these Matters, when you were forced to forbear your worldly Labours, even by the wholesom Law of the Land. These therefore are all but vain Excuses; and God will shortly make thee speak out and plainly confess, it was not so much for want of Time or Helps, or warning, as for want of a Heart to use them well. I should have found some time, though it had been when I should have slept, if my Heart had been but set upon it.

The seventh Excuse. *Little did I think to have seen this Day: I did not believe that ever God would be so severe. I thought his Threatnings had been but to keep Men in awe; and I suspected either that the Scripture was not his Word, or else I thought he would be better than his Word. I thought all that I heard of another Life had been uncertain; and therefore was loth to let go a Certainty for an Uncertainty, and lose my present Pleasures which I had in hand for the Hopes of that which I never did see.*

Answ. He that will not know his Misery by believing to prevent it, shall know it by feeling to endure it. You were told and told again what your Unbelief would bring you to. Did God's Word make Heaven and Earth? doth it support them, and secure them? and

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is not his Word sufficient Security for you to have trusted your Souls upon? did you know where was any better Security to be had? and where was any surer Ground for your Confidence? And did you think so basely and blasphemously of God, that he would falsify his Word, lest such as you should suffer? and that he was fain to rule the World by a Lie? Did God make the World so easily? and can he not govern it by true and righteous Means? what need God to say that which he will not do, to awe Sinners? can he not awe them by Truth? is it not just that those should eternally perish, that will entertain such desperate Thoughts of God, and then by such wicked Imaginations encourage themselves in Sin against him?

And for the Truth of Scripture, God did not bid you believe it without Evidence. He stamped on it the Image of his own Purity and Perfection, that you might know it by that Image and Superscription, if you had Eyes to see them: He sealed it by uncontrouled Multitudes of Miracles: He delivered it down to your hands by infallible Witnesses, so that he left you no room for rational Doubting.

And you knew that the Matters of this World were not only uncertain, but certainly vain and transitory, and would shortly come to nothing, and leave you in distress. If it had then been uncertain whether there were a Glory and Misery hereafter, (as it was not) should not Reason have taught you to prefer the least Probabilities of an everlasting unspeakable Happiness, before that which is certainly perishing and vain? These vain Excuses will but condemn you.

The eighth Excuse. *I was so enticed and perswaded by Sinners to do as they did, that I could not deny them: they would never let me rest.*

Answ. And were you not as earnestly perswaded by God to forsake Sin and serve him, and yet that would not prevail with you? You could not deny the Devils and Fools, but you could deny God and all his Messen-

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gers. Were not Miniſters as earneſt with you every Week to repent and amend? What did Men entice you with? with a little deluding fleſhly Pleaſure for a few Days? And what did God entice you with? with the Promiſe of endleſs unconceivable Felicity! And if this were a ſmaller Matter in your Eyes than the other, then you have had your choice; be content with it, and thank your ſelves. In your Life-time you had the good things which you choſe, and preferred before Heaven, and therefore cannot expect to have Heaven beſides.

The ninth Excuſe. *I lived among ungodly Perſons, that derided all that feared God; ſo that if I had not done as they did, but had made any more ado to be ſaved, I ſhould have been the very Scorn of the Place where I lived.*

Anſw. And was not Heaven worth the enduring of a Scorn? Is not he worthy to go without it that thinks ſo baſely of it? Did not Chriſt tell you that if you were aſhamed of him before Men, he would be aſhamed of you before his Father and the Angels of Heaven? *Mark* 8. 38. He ſuffered more than Scorns for you: and could not you ſuffer a Scorn for him and your ſelves? ſeeing you choſe rather to endure everlaſting Torment, than a little deriſion from ignorant Men, take that which you made choice of. And ſeeing ſo ſmall a Matter would drive you from Heaven, and part God and you, as a Mock, as the Wind of a Man's Mouth, no wonder if you be commanded to Depart from him into everlaſting Fire.

The tenth Excuſe. *I had ungodly Perſons to my Parents, or Maſters, or Landlord, or Governours, who threatned to undo me, if I had addicted my ſelf to ſo ſtrict a Life, and if I would not believe and do as they did.*

Anſw. What if they threatned you with preſent Death? Did not God alſo threaten you with everlaſting Death, if you were not ruled by him? And whoſe threatning ſhould you have chiefly feared? Is Man more

dreadful than God? Is Death more terrible than Hell? Did not Christ bid you *fear not them that can kill the Body, and after that can do no more; but fear him that is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell-fire; yea I say unto you, fear him?* Mat. 10. 28. Luke 12. 4, 5. and Isa. 51. 7. *Fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be afraid of their Revilings. For the Moth shall eat them up like a Garment, and the Worm shall eat them like Wool: but my Righteousness shall be for ever, and my Salvation from Generation to Generation.* Seeing therefore you have chosen rather to suffer from God for ever for your Sin, than to suffer small Matters for well-doing for a Moment, you must ever bear your own Choice. Christ told you beforehand, that if you could not forsake all the World and your own Lives for him, you could not be his Disciples, *Mat.* 10. 37, 38, 39. And seeing you thought his Terms too hard, and would needs seek you out a better Service, even take what you have chosen and found.

The eleventh Excuse. *I saw so many follow their Pleasure and their worldly Business, and never look after these higher things, and so few go the other way, that I thought sure God would not damn so great a Part of the World, and therefore I ventured to do as the most did.*

Answ. God will make good his Word upon many or few. Did you doubt of his Will, or of his Power? For his Will he hath told it you in his Word. For his Power he is as able to punish many as one Man. What is all the World to him, but as the Drop of a Bucket, as the Dust of the Ballance? He told you before-hand that the Gate was strait, and the Way to Heaven was narrow, and few did find it; and the Gate to Destruction was wide, and the Way was broad, and many did enter in at it, *Mat.* 7. 13, 14. And if you would not believe him, you must bear what your Unbelief hath brought you to. What if you had twenty Children, or Servants, or Friends, and the greater part of them should prove false to you and seek your Destruction,

or prove disobedient, and turn to your Enemy? would you think it a good Excuse if the rest should do the like because of their Example? will you therefore wrong God because you see others wrong him? would you spit in the Face of your own Father if you saw others do so? God warned you, that you should not follow a Multitude to do Evil, *Exod.* 23. 2. And if yet you will *do* as most *do*, you must even *speed* as most *speed*. You should not so much consider who they be, as what they do, and whither they go, and who they forsake, and what they lose, and what strength is in the Reasons that move them to do this. And then you would find, it is *God* they forsake, it is *Sin* they choose; it is *Heaven* they lose, it is *Hell* they run into: and it is no true Reason, but Satan's Delusion and sensual Inclination that lead them to it. And should Men be imitated, be they many, or be they few, in such a Course as this?

The twelfth Excuse. *I saw so many Faults in those that were accounted Godly, and saw so much Division among them, that I thought they were as bad as others; and among so many Opinions, I knew not what Religion to be of.*

Answ. 1. A Spot is soonest seen in the fairest Cloth: And the malicious World useth to make such far worse than they are.

2. But suppose all were true that Malice saith of some, you could not say the like by others.

3. Or if you could, yet it was God's Law, and not Mens Faults that was made the Rule for you to live by: Will it excuse you that others are bad?

4. And from their diverse Opinions, you should have taken counsel at God's Word, which was right: Did you first search the Scripture impartially, as willing to know the Truth, that you might obey it? and did you pray daily that God would lead you into the Truth? and did you obey as much as you knew? Did you join with the Godly so far as they are all agreed? they are all agreed in the Fundamental Articles of Christianity, and

and in all things absolutely necessary to a holy Life, and to Salvation: that all known Sin is to be forsaken, and all known Duty to be done. Why did you not so far then agree with them? Alas, the Imperfections of the Godly, and the false Accusations of the malicious World, will prove but a poor Cover for your wilful Ungodliness, and Christ will convince you of the Vanity of these Excuses.

The thirteenth Excuse. *The Scriptures were so dark that I could not understand them. And I saw the wisest Men differ so much in the Exposition of them, that I thought it was in vain for me to trouble my self about them. If God would have had us live according to the Scriptures, he would have written them plainly, that Men might understand them.*

Answ. 1. It is all plainly written according to the Nature of the Subject: But a prejudiced, disaffected, yea or but untaught, disused Soul cannot at first understand the plainest Teaching. The plainest Greek or Hebrew Grammar that can be written, will be utterly obscure to him that is but newly entred the English School; yea after many Years time that he spends in Learning. Did you study hard, and pray for God's Teaching, and enquire of others, and wait patiently in Christ's School, that you might come to farther Knowledg by degrees? and were you *willing* to know even those Truths that called you out to self-denial, and that did put you on the hardest Flesh-displeasing Duties? had you done thus, you would have admired the Light of the Holy Scripture, and now have rejoiced that ever you saw them, and not have quarrelled at its seeming darkness. This Word might have made you *wise* to Salvation, as it hath done others, *Act.* 20. 32. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. *This Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes.* Psal. 19. 7, 8.

2. So much as is of Neceſſity to Salvation, is as plain as you could deſire. Yet if you be judged by theſe, you will be condemned: For you did not obey that which was moſt plain. What Darkneſs is in ſuch Words as theſe, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh*, Luke 13. 3, 5. *Love not the World, nor the things in the World: if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15. *He that will come after me, let him deny himſelf?* &c. Mat. 16. 24.

3. If there had been nothing that ſeemed difficult to you, would you not have deſpiſed its ſimplicity, and have thought your ſelves wiſe enough at the firſt Reading, and needed no more?

The fourteenth Excuſe. *There were ſo many ſeeming Contradictions in the Scripture, and ſo many ſtrange improbable things, that I could not believe it.*

Anſw. The Contradictions were in your fancy, that did not underſtand the Word which you read. Muſt the raw unexperienced Learner deſpiſe his Book or Teacher, as oft as in his Ignorance he thinks he meets with Contradictions? Did you think God was no wiſer than you, and underſtood not himſelf, becauſe you underſtood him not? Nor could reconcile his own Words, becauſe you could not reconcile them? You would needs be a Judg of the Law, inſtead of obeying it, and ſpeak evil of it rather than do it, *Jam.* 4. 11.

2. And thoſe things which you called improbable in the Word, were the Wonders of God, of purpoſe to confirm it. If it had not been confirmed by Wonders, you would have thought it unproved; and yet now it is ſo confirmed, you will not believe the Doctrine, becauſe the Witneſs ſeems incredible. And that is, becauſe they are Matters above the Power of Man: as if they were therefore above the Power of God! You ſhall at laſt have your Eyes ſo far opened, as to ſee thoſe ſeeming Contradictions reconciled, and the certainty of thoſe things which you accounted improbable: that you may be forced to confeſs the Folly o

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your Arrogancy and Unbelief: and then God will judg you in Righteouſneſs, who preſumed unrighteouſly to judg him and his Word.

The fifteenth Excuſe. *It ſeemed ſo unlikely a thing to me, that the merciful God ſhould damn moſt of the World to everlaſting Fire, that I could not believe it.*

Anſw. 1. And did it not ſeem as unlikely to you, that his Word ſhould be falſe?

2. Should it not have ſeemed as unlikely that the Governour of the World ſhould be unjuſt, and ſuffer his Law to be unexecuted, and the worſt to ſpeed as well as the beſt, and to ſuffer vile ſinful Duſt to deſpiſe his Mercy, and abuſe his Patience, and turn all his Creatures againſt him without due Puniſhment?

3. Did you not feel Pain and Miſery begin in this Life?

4. You ſaw Toads and Serpents which had never ſinned: And you would rather live in any tolerable Suffering than be a Toad. And is it not Reaſon that it ſhould go worſe with contemptuous Sinners, than with thoſe Creatures that never ſinned?

5. Could you expect that thoſe ſhould come to Heaven, that would not believe there was ſuch a State, but refuſed it, and preferred the World before it? And to be out of Heaven, is to be out of all Happineſs: and he that is ſo out of all Happineſs, and knows that he loſt it by his own Folly, muſt needs torment himſelf with ſuch Conſiderations, were there no other Torments. And as Man is capable of greater Felicity than Brutes, ſo muſt he needs be capable of more Miſery.

The ſixteenth Excuſe. *The things which God promiſed in Heaven, and threatned in Hell, were all out of my Sight: and therefore I could not heartily believe them. Had I but once ſeen them, or ſpoke with one that had ſeen them, I ſhould have been ſatisfied, and have contemned the things of the World.*

Answ. Will you not believe till you see or feel? Was not God's Word sufficient Evidence? would you have believed one from the dead that had told you he had seen such things? and would you not believe *Stephen* that saw them? *Act.* 7. 56. Or *Paul* that heard and saw them? 2 *Cor.* 12. 3, 4. Nor Christ that came purposely from Heaven to reveal them? why Flesh and Blood cannot see them. You see not God: will you not therefore believe that there is a God? Indeed, whatever you imagine, if you would not believe *Moses* and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, neither would you have believed though one had risen from the dead: For God's Word is more credible than a dead Man's: and Christ did rise from the dead to attest it. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed. *Noah* saw no Rain when he was preparing the Ark: but because he *believed*, he made ready and escaped, *Heb.* 11. 7. when the World that would not *believe* did perish. But seeing God's Word was of no more weight with you, and no Knowledg would serve your turn but by *seeing* and *feeling*; you shall *see* and *feel* everlastingly to your Sorrow.

The seventeenth Excuse. *It was so strict a Law that God would have ruled me by, and the Way to Heaven was so strait and difficult, that I could not endure it. I was not able to deny my Flesh, and live such a Life.*

Answ. 1. You were not *able*, because you were not *willing*. What was there but your own wicked Hearts that should make such a Life seem grievous to you? Every thing is hard and grievous to him who loaths it, and whose Heart is against it. The chief thing that God called you to, was to *love* him, and make him your *Delight*: and are Love and Delight such grievous things? It was not grievous to you to love your Meat, or Drink, or Money: It was no hard matter to you to love a Friend that loved you; no nor to love your Sin, which was your Enemy: and what should make it seem hard to love God, but a wicked Heart? Is not he

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better and more lovely than all these? And had you but loved him, all the rest of his Service would have seemed easy to you. To think of him, to speak of him, to pray to him, to praise him; yea, to deny all and suffer for him, would have been sweet and pleasant to you, so far as you had loved him. It was not God therefore, but your own naughty Hearts that made his Work seem grievous to you, and the Way to Heaven seem hard. He told you truly, that his Yoak was easy, and his Burden light, and his Commandments were not grievous, *Mat.* 11. 29. 1 *John* 5. 3. They that tried them found them the very Joy and Delight of their Souls; and why could not you do so?

2. But what if the Way to Heaven had been harder than it was? Was not Heaven worth your Labour? Were you afraid of being a loser by it? Could not God requite your Labour or Sufferings? Doth any repent when they come to Heaven, that it cost them so dear to come thither? And is not Hell worse than the hardest Way to Heaven? Seeing you have chosen Hell to save you a Labour and Suffering in this Life, you must have your Choice. And seeing you thought not everlasting Life to be worth so much as God required, that is, the accepting thankfully, and minding, and seeking, and preferring it before this Life, you have none to blame for the loss of it but your selves.

The eighteenth Excuse. *It was God that made me of a sensual Nature: He gave me an Appetite to Meat, and Drink, and Ease, and Lust: he gave me that Flesh which ruled me; how then can he condemn me, for living according to the Nature which he gave me?*

Answ. He gave that Appetite to be exercised moderately under the Rule of Reason, for the Preservation and Propagation of Mankind: But did he not also give you Reason to govern that Appetite? and the Revelation of his Will to guide that Reason? He gave you your Flesh to be a Servant, and not a Master. Your Beast hath fleshly Appetite without Reason; and there-

fore God hath put him under you, who have Reason that you should rule him. Will you let your Beast do what he list, and madly run upon whom he list, and say, you do but let him live according to his Nature which God hath given him? Why God that gave him such a Nature, did intend him to be ruled by a higher Nature, even by the Reason which he gave to you: and so he did also by your Flesh and sensual Appetite.

The nineteenth Excuse. *But I lived among so many Baits which enticed this Flesh, that I could not resist them. My Meat was a Snare to me, my Drink a Snare, my Clothes, my House, my Land a Snare, every Beauty that I saw was a Snare: and the better all these were, the stronger was my Snare. If God would not have had my Heart ensnared and drawn from him, he should not have put so many Baits in my way. Yea and they were so* near *to me, and* daily *with me, that though I was resolved to forbear them before, yet when they were brought to my hand, I could not forbear.*

Answ. Is this the Thanks that God hath for his Mercies? He sent you all these as Favours from his own hand: he wrote his own Name upon them, that in them you might see his Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, and so be led up to the Consideration of him, that you might fall in love with himself, who was the Fountain, the Life, the End of all. And do you overlook God in the Creature, and live as without him in the World, and dote upon that which should have drawn you to himself, and then lay the Blame on God? If he send a Sutor to speak to you in his Name, and write you a Love-Letter with his own Hand, will you fall in love with the Messengers or the Letter, and neglect the Sender, and then blame him that wrote his Letter on so fair a Paper, or in so neat a Hand, or that sent it by such a comely Messenger? Certainly, these Excuses are too gross, to take with the wise and righteous God, or to seem sufficient to a well informed Conscience.

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2. And whereas you ſpeak of the Power of theſe Objects, was there not much more in God, in Chriſt, in the promiſed Glory, to have drawn your Heart another Way? Why then did not theſe take as much with you as the other? You could not chooſe forſooth, but be enticed with ſuch Baits as were fitted to your ſenſual Appetite, and ſuch things as a Dog, or a Swine may enjoy as well as a Man: but you could *chooſe*, when Chriſt and Glory were offered you: yea you did *chooſe* to refuſe the Offer, and tread them under Feet by your neglect. When Satan ſet your Cups, and your Harlots, and your Profits before you on one ſide; did not God ſet his Favour and everlaſting Happineſs on the other ſide? And was it wiſe or equal Dealing, to prefer your Luſts before that Glory?

3. Moreover, it was not in the Power of any of thoſe Baits to force your Will, or to neceſſitate you to chooſe them. They could be but *Baits* to entice you, and it was ſtill in your own Choice, whether you would yield to the Enticement, and chooſe them or not. Shall every Man be falſe to God that hath any Bait to entice him from him? will you excuſe your Child or Friend, if he would be falſe to you, upon as great Enticements as theſe? If a Cup of Drink, or a Whore, or a little Gain, could draw him more than all your Love and Intereſt, I do not think you would hold him excuſed.

And whereas you ſpeak of the *nearneſs* and *continuance* of theſe Allurements, I would fain know, was not God as *near* you, and *continually* near you, to draw you to himſelf? Faith might have ſeen him, though Fleſh and Blood cannot. Did he not ſtand by you when you were in your Cups and luſtful Pleaſures? Did he not tell you of the Danger, and offer you far better things, if you would obey him and deſpiſe thoſe Baits? But you would hearken to none of this; you ſhould have remembred that he ſtood over you, and was looking on you, and you ſhould have ſaid as *Joſeph*,

Gen. 29. 9. *How can I do this great Wickedness, and sin against God?* You had also Scripture near you, and Reason near you, and Conscience near you, as well as the Bait was near you. And therefore this is a vain Excuse.

The twentieth Excuse. *It was God that let loose the Devil to tempt me; and he was too subtile for me to deal with; and therefore what wonder if I sinned and were overcome?*

Answ. 1. He did not let loose the Devil to *constrain* you to Sin. He could but *entice*, and you might choose whether you would yield. The Devil could neither make you sin against your Will, nor yet necessitate you to be willing.

2. You were a sure Friend to Christ that while, that would forsake him as oft as you were tempted by the Devil. Is that a Friend or a Servant worthy to be regarded, that will disobey you, or betray you as oft as he is tempted to it?

3. Will you excuse your Servant if he leave your Work undone, and follow Cards, or Dice, or the Alehouse, and say I was tempted to it by one that was cunninger than I? Shall every Murderer or Thief escape hanging, because the Devil was too cunning for him in his Temptations? Would you have the Jury or the Judg to take this for a good Excuse?

4. And why did you not hearken to God that enticed you the other way? You forget what Helps he afforded you to discover the Wiles of Satan, and to vanquish the Temptation? He *told* you it was an Enemy that tempted you: and would you hearken to an Enemy? He *told* you it was a Dream, a Shadow, a painted Pleasure, a guilded Carcass, a lying Promise, and deceitful Vanity by which you were tempted; and yet would you regard it before your God? He told you that it was your God, your Saviour, your Hope, your everlasting Happiness that the Tempter would beguile you of: And yet would you be beguiled? He told you, and plainly,

plainly, and often told you, that the Temper would lead you to eternal Fire, and undo you everlastingly before you were aware; and that a fatal Hook was covered with that Bait: And yet would you swallow it?

5. It is plain by all this that it was not your natural Weakness of Faculties that caused you to be overcome by the Subtilties of the Devil, as a silly Child is deceived by a crafty Fellow that overwits him: But it was your Carelessness, Inconsiderateness, your sensual Inclinations, and vicious Disposition, that drew you to a wilful Obeying of the Tempter, and rejecting the wholesom Advice of Christ. This therefore is a frivolous Excuse of your Sin.

The one and twentieth Excuse. *But I hope you will not say that all Men have* Free Will! *And if my Will were not free, how could I choose but sin?*

Answ. 1. Your Will was not free from God's Rule and Government. 2. Nor was it free from its natural Inclination to Good in general; for either of these were more properly Slavery. 3. Nor was it free from the Influence of a dark Understanding. 4. Nor free from its own contracted vitious Inclination. 5. Nor freed from the Temptations of the Flesh, the World, and the Devil.

But it was, 1. Free from any natural Determination to Evil, or to any thing that was doubtful. 2. And free from the Coaction or Violence of any. 3. And free from an irresistible Determination of any exteriour Cause, at least ordinarily. So that naturally, as Men, you have the Power or Faculty of determining your own Wills, and by your Wills of ruling your inferiour Faculties in a great measure; yea, of ruling the Senses and the Phantasy it self, which doth so much to dispose of our Understanding. And if your Wills, which are naturally free, are yet so habitually vitious, that they encline you to do evil, that is not an Excuse, but an Aggravation of your Sin. But of this more under the next.

The two and twentieth Excuſe. *But I have not Power of my ſelf to do any thing that is good: what can the Creature do? without Chriſt we can do nothing. It is God that muſt give me Ability, or I can have none: and if he had given it me, I had not been an Unbeliever or Impenitent. I can no more believe of my ſelf, than I can fulfil the Law of my ſelf.*

Anſw. 1. Theſe are the vain Cavils of learned Folly, which God will eaſily anſwer in a Word. The Word [Power] is taken in ſeveral Senſes. Sometime, and moſt commonly and fitly, for a Faculty or a Strength by which a Man *can* do his Duty if he *will*. This phyſical Power you have, and the worſt of Sinners have while they are Men on Earth. Were they actually willing, they might acceptably perform ſincere Obedience; and were they diſpoſitively willing, they might actually believe and will. And thus the Ungodly have Power to believe.

Sometime the word [Power] is taken for Authority or Leave, for legal or civil Power. And thus you have all not only Power or Liberty to believe, but alſo a Command which makes it your Duty, and a Threatning adjoined, which will condemn you if you do not.

Sometime the Word [Power] is taken ethically, and leſs properly, for a Diſpoſition, Inclination, Habit, or Freedom from the contrary Habit or Diſpoſition. And in this Senſe it's true, that none but the effectually called have a Power to believe. But then obſerve, 1. That this is but a Moral, leſs proper, and not a Phyſical proper Impotency: And therefore *Auſtin* chuſeth rather to ſay that all Men have *power* to believe, but all have not a *Will*, or *Faith* it ſelf; becauſe we uſe to difference *Power* from *Willingneſs*; and *Willingneſs* actuateth the *Power* which we had before. And therefore our Divines chooſe rather to call Grace a Habit when they ſpeak exactly, than a Power; and Dr. *Twiſs* derides the Arminians for talking of a *Power* ſubjected in a

Power,

Power. 2. Note that this Impotency is but the same thing with your Unwillingness and wilful Blindness in another Word. 3. Note that this Impotency is long of your selves as to the Original, and much more as to the not curing and removing of it. Hath God given you no means towards the Cure of this Disability, which you have neglected? 4. Note that this Impotency is not a just Excuse, but an Aggravation of your Sin. If you were *willing* to be the Servant of Christ, and yet were not able either because he would not accept you, or because of a want of natural Faculties, or because of some other natural Difficulty which the *willingest* Mind could not overcome, this were some Excuse: But to be habitually wilful in refusing Grace, is worse than to be meerly actually unwilling. If a Man have so accustomed himself to Murder, Drunkenness, Stealing or the like Wickedness, so far that he cannot leave it, will you therefore forgive him, or will any Judg or Jury hold him excused? Or rather think him the more unfit for Mercy? 5. Note also that the want of a supernatural Habit, no nor the Presence of the contrary Habit, do not efficiently determine the Will to particular Acts, much less take away its natural Freedom. 6. And that till Habits attain an utter Predominancy, (at least) there is a Power remaining in the Will to resist them, and use Means against them. Though eventually the perverse Inclination may hinder the use of it.

The three and twentieth Excuse. *I have heard from learned Men, that God doth determine all Actions, natural and free, as the first efficient physical immediate Cause: or else nothing could act. And then it was not long of me that I chose forbidden Objects, but of him that irresistibly moved me thereto, and whose Instrument I was.*

Answ. This is a trick of that Wisdom which is Foolishness with God, and to be deceived by vain Philosophy.

1. The very Principle it self is most likely to be false, and those that tell you this do err. Much more, I think, may be said against it than for it.

2. I am sure it is either false, or irreconcileable with God's Holiness, and Man's Liberty and Culpability; so that its a mad thing to deceive your selves with such philosophical Uncertainties, when the Truth which you oppose by it is infallibly certain. That God is not the Author of Sin, but Man himself, who is justly condemned for it, is undoubtedly true: and would you obscure so clear a Truth, by searching into Points beyond humane Reach if not unsound, as you conclude them?

The four and twentieth Excuse. *But at least, those learned Divines among us that doubt of this, do yet say that the Will is necessarily and infallibly determined by the practical Understanding, and that is as much unresistibly necessitated by Objects: and therefore whatever act was done by my Understanding or Will, was thus necessitated, and I could not help it. They say, Liberty is but the Acting of the Faculty agreeably to its Nature: And it was God as Creator that gave* Adam *his Faculties, and God by providential Dispose, that presented all Objects to him, by which his Understanding, and so his Will were unavoidably necessitated.*

Answ. This is of the same Nature with the former; uncertain, if not certainly false. Were this true, for ought we can see, it would lay all the Sin and Misery of this World on God, as the unresistible necessitating Cause; which because we know infallibly to be false, we have no reason to take such Principles to be true which infer it. The Understanding doth not by a necessary Efficiency determine the Will, but morally; or rather, is regularly a Condition or necessary Antecedent, without which it may not determine it self. Yea the Will by commanding the Sense and Phantasy, doth much to determine the Understanding. As the Eye is not necessary to my *going*, but to my *going right*, so is not the Understanding's Guidance necessary to

my

my *willing*, (there the simple Apprehension may suffice) but to my *right willing*. There are other ways of determining the Will. Or if the Understanding did determine the Will efficiently and necessarily, it is not every act of the Understanding that must do it. If it be so, when it saith, This *must* be done, and saith it importunately; yet not when it only saith, This may be done, or you may venture on it, which is the common part which it hath in Sin.

I am not pleased that these curious Objections fall in the Way, nor do I delight to put them into vulgar Heads; but finding many young Scholars and others that have conversed with them, assaulted with these Temptations, I thought meet to give a Touch, and but a Touch, to take them out of their Way: As Mr. *Fenner* hath done more fully in the Preface to his *Hidden Manna*, on this last point, to which I refer you. I only add this.

The Will of Man in its very Dominion doth bear God's Image. It is a self-determining Power, though it be *biassed* by *Habits*, and *needs* a *Guide*. As the Heart and Vital Spirits by which it acteth, are to the rest of the Body, so is *it* to the Soul. The Light of Nature hath taught all the World to carry the Guilt of every Crime to the *Will* of Man, and there to leave it. Upon this all Laws and Judgments are grounded. From Ignorance and intellectual Weakness, Men commonly fetch Excuses for their Faults; but from the Will they are aggravated. If we think it strange that Man's Will should be the first Cause, so much as of a sinful *Mode*, and answer all occurring Objections: it may suffice that we are certain the Holy Majesty is not the Author of Sin; and he is able to make all this as plain as the Sun, and easily answer all these vain Excuses, though we should be unable. And if we be much ignorant of the Frame and Motions of our own Souls, and especially of that high self-determining Principle, free-Will, the great Spring of our Actions, and the curious Engine by which God doth

doth *ſapientially* govern the World, it is no wonder, conſidering that the Soul can know it ſelf but by Reflection, and God gave us a Soul to *uſe*, rather than to know it ſelf; and to know its Qualities and Operations, rather than its Eſſence.

The five and twentieth Excuſe. *No Man can be ſaved, nor avoid any Sin, nor believe in Chriſt, but thoſe whom God hath predeſtinated thereto. I was under an irreverſible Sentence before I was born: and therefore I do nothing but what I was predeſtinated to do; and if God decreed not to ſave me, how could I help it?*

Anſw. 1. God's Judgments are more plain, but his Decrees or ſecret Purpoſes are myſterious: And to darken Certainties, by having recourſe to Points obſcure, is no part of Chriſtian Wiſdom. God told you your Duty in his Word, and on what Terms you muſt be judged to Life or Death; hither ſhould you have recourſe for Direction, and not to the unſearchable Myſteries of his *Mind*.

2. God decreeth not to condemn any but for Sin. Sin, I ſay, is the Cauſe of that Condemnation, though not of his Decree.

3. God's Decrees are Acts Immanent in himſelf, and make no change on you, and therefore do not neceſſitate you to ſin, any more than his Fore-knowledg doth. For both cauſe only a neceſſity of Conſequence, which is Logical, as the Divines on both ſides do confeſs. And therefore this no more cauſed you to ſin, than if there had been no ſuch Decree. And it's a Doubt whether that Decree be not negative; a willing Suſpending of the Divine Will, as to evil; or at moſt a Purpoſe to permit it.

The ſix and twentieth Excuſe. *If it be no more, yet doth it make my Perdition unavoidable; for even God's Foreknowledg doth ſo; for if he foreknow it, all the World cannot hinder it from coming to paſs.*

Anſw. Muſt God either be ignorant of what you will do, or elſe be the Cauſe of it? If you foreknow that

that the Sun will rise to morrow, that doth not cause it to rise. If you foreknow that one Man will murder another, you are not the Cause of it by foreknowing it. So is it here.

The seven and twentieth Excuse. *God might have hindred my Sin and Damnation if he would.*

Answ. And will you wilfully sin, and think to escape because God doth not hinder you? The Prince that makes a Law against Murder, could lock you up, and keep you from being a Murderer. But are you excusable if he do not? We are certain that God could have hindered all the Sin and Death, and Confusion, and Misery that is in the Word: and we are as certain that he doth not hinder it (but by forbidding it, and giving Men means against it:) and we are certain that he is Just, and Good, and Wise in all, and not bound to hinder it: And what his Reasons are, you may better know hereafter: In the mean time, you had been better have looked to your own Duty.

The eight and twentieth Excuse. *How could I be saved if Christ did not die for me? He died but for his Elect; and none could be saved without his Death.*

Answ. He *did* die for you, and for more than his Elect, though he absolutely purposed only their Salvation. Your Sins crucified him, and your Debt lay upon him; and he so far ransomed you, that nothing but your wilful Refusal of the Benefits could have condemned you.

The nine and twentieth Excuse. *It was* Adam's *Sin that brought me into this Depravedness of* Will, *which I can neither cure, nor could prevent.*

Answ. 1. If *Adam* cast away his Holiness, he could no more convey that to us which he cast away, than a Nobleman that is a Traitor, can convey his lost Inheritance or Honours to his Son.

2. You perish not only for your Original Sin, but for rejecting the recovering Mercy of the Redeemer: you might have had Christ and Life in him for the accepting.

The

The thirtieth Excuse. *God will require no more than he gives. He gave me not Grace to repent and believe; and without his Gift I could not have it.*

Answ. 1. God will justly require more than he giveth; that is, the improvement of his Gifts, as *Mat.* 25. shews. He gave *Adam* but a *Power* to persevere, and not *actual Perseverance:* Yet did he justly punish him for want of the Act; even for not using by his own Wll the Power which he had given him.

2. It is long of your self if God did not give you Grace to believe: It was because you wilfully refused some preparatory Grace. Christ found you at a great distance from him, and he gave you Grace sufficient to have brought you *nearer* to him than you were; you had Grace sufficient to have made you better than you were, and restrained many Sins, and brought you to the means, when you turned your back on them: tho this were not *sufficient* to cause you to *believe*, it was *sufficient* to have brought you *nearer* to *believing*; and through your own wilfulness, became *not effectual*; even as *Adam* had *sufficient* Grace to have stood, which was *not effectual.* So that you had not only Christ offered to you, if you would but accept him; but you had daily and precious Helps and Means, to have cured your Wills, and caused you to accept him; for neglect of which, and so for not believing, and so for all your other Sins, you justly perish.

The one and thirtieth Excuse. *Alas, Man is a Worm, a dry Leaf!* Job 13. 25. *a silly foolish Creature, and therefore his Actions be not regardable, nor deserve so great a Punishment.*

Answ. Though he be a Worm, and as nothing to God, and foolish by Sin, yet he is naturally so noble a Creature, that the Image of God was on him, *Gen.* 12. 26. and 5. 1. *James* 3. 9. and the World made his Servants, and Angels his Attendants, *Heb.* 1. 14. so noble that Christ died for him, God takes special care of him; he is capable of knowing and enjoying God,

and

and Heaven is not thought too good for him if he will obey. And he that is capable of so great Good, must be capable of as great Evil, and his Ways not to be so overlooked by that God that hath undertaken to be his Governour. When it tendeth to Infidelity, the Devil will teach you to debase Man, even lower than God would do.

The two and thirtieth Excuse. *Sin is no* Being: *and shall Men be damned for that which is nothing?*

Answ. 1. It is such a *Mode* as deformeth God's Creature. It is a moral Being. It is a Relation of our Actions and Hearts to God's Will and Law.

2. They that say, Sin is nothing, say Pain and Loss is nothing too. You shall therefore be paid with one nothing for another. Make light of your Misery, and say, it is nothing, as you did of your Sin.

3. Will you take this for a good Excuse from your Children or Servants, if they abuse you? or from a Thief or a Murderer? shall he escape by telling the Judg that his Sin was *nothing?* Or rather have Death, which is nothing, as the just Reward of it?

The three and thirtieth Excuse. *But Sin is a transient Thing. At least it doth God no harm, and therefore why should he do us so much harm for it?*

Answ. 1. It hurts not God, because he is above hurt. No thanks to you if he be out of your reach. 2. You may *wrong* him, when you cannot *hurt* him. And the *Wrong* deserves as much as you can bear. If a Traitor endeavour the Death of the Prince in vain, his Endeavour deserves Death, though he never *hurt* him. You despise God's Law and Authority; you cause the Blaspheming of his Name, *Rom.* 2. 24. He calls it a Pressing him as a Cart is pressed with Sheaves, *Amos* 2. 13. and a Grieving of him.

3. And you wrong his Image, his Church, the publick Good, and the Souls of others.

The four and thirtieth Excuse. *But God's Nature is so good and merciful, that sure he will not damn his own Creature.* *Answ.*

Answ. 1. A merciful Judg will hang a Man for a Fault against Man: By proportion then what is due for Sin against God?

2. All the Death and Calamity which you see in the World, comes from the Anger of this merciful God: why then may not future Misery come from it?

3. God knoweth his own Mercy better than you do; and he hath told you how far it shall extend.

4. He is infinitely merciful; but it is to the Heirs of Mercy, not to the final Rejecters of his Mercy.

5. Hath not God been merciful to thee in bearing with thee so long, and offering thee Grace in the Blood of Christ, till thou didst wilfully reject it? Thou wilt confess to thy everlasting Wo that God was merciful; had he not been so merciful, thou wouldst not have been so miserable for rejecting it.

The five and thirtieth Excuse. *I would not so torment mine Enemy my self.*

Answ. No reason you should. Is it all one to wrong you, and to wrong the God of Heaven? God is the only Judg of his own Wrongs.

The sixth and thirtieth Excuse. *All Men are Sinners; and I was but a Sinner.*

Answ. All were not impenitent, unbelieving, rebellious Sinners, and therefore all are not unpardoned, condemned Sinners. All did not live after the Flesh, and refuse to the last to be converted as you did. God will teach you better to difference between Sinners and Sinners.

The seven and thirtieth Excuse. *But if Christ have satisfied for my Sins, and died for me, then how can I justly suffer for the same Sins? will God punish one Sin twice?*

Answ. 1. Christ suffered for Man in the Nature of Man; but not in your Person, nor you in him. It was not you that provided the Price, but God himself: Christ was not Man's Delegate in satisfying, and therefore received not his Instructions from us, nor did

it

it on our Terms, but his own. It was not the *same thing* which the Law threatned, that Christ underwent: for that was the Damnation of the Sinner himself, and not the Suffering of another for him; it cannot therefore be yours but on Christ's own Terms. He died for thy Sin, but with this intent, that for all that if thou refuse him, thou shalt die thy self. It is therefore no wrong to thee to die, for it was not thou that diedst before, and Christ will take it for no wrong to him: for *he* will judg thee to that Death. It is for refusing a Christ that died for thee, that thou must perish for ever.

The eight and thirtieth Excuse. *But I did not refuse Christ. I believed and trusted in him to the last; and repented of my Sins, though I sometime was overtaken with them.*

Answ. Had this been true, thy Sin would not have condemned thee. But there is no mocking God. He will shew thee then thy naked Heart, and convince thousands that thought they believed and repented, that indeed they did not. By thy Works also will this be discovered, that is, by the main bent and scope of thy Life, as *Mat.* 25. throughout, and *Jam.* 2.

The nine and thirtieth Excuse. *I did many good Works; and I hope God will set those against my evil Works.*

Answ. Thy good Works were thy Sins, because indeed they were not good, being not done in sincerity of Heart for God. The best Man's Works have some Infirmity, which nothing can cleanse but the Blood of Christ, which thou hast made light of, and therefore hast no part in. If all thy Life had been spent in perfect Works except one day, they would not make satisfaction for the Sins of that Day. For they are but part of thy Duty. Wo to him that hath no better a Saviour at Judgment, than his own good Works.

The fortieth Excuse. *I lived in Poverty and Misery on Earth, and therefore I hope I have had my Sufferinghere,*

and

and ſhall not ſuffer in this World and another too.

1. By that Rule all poor Men and Murderers, and Thieves that are tormented and hanged, ſhould be ſaved. But as Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of this Life and that to come, ſo Impenitency and Wickedneſs hath the Threatning of this Life and that to come.

2. The Devils and the damned have ſuffered much more than you already; and yet they are never the nearer a Deliverance. When thou haſt ſuffered ten thouſand Years, thy Pain will be never the nearer an end. How then can a little Miſery on Earth prevent it? Alas, poor Soul, theſe are but the Foretaſts and Beginnings of thy Sorrow. Nothing but Pardon through the Blood of Chriſt could have prevented thy Condemnation; and that thou rejectedſt by Infidelity and Impenitency. *His* Sufferings would have ſaved thee, if thou hadſt not refuſed him; but all thy own Sufferings will yield thee no Relief.

So much for the anſwering of the *vain Excuſes* which poor Sinners are ready to make for themſelves; wherein I have been ſo large, as that this part I confeſs is diſproportionable to the reſt: but it was for theſe two Reaſons.

1. That poor careleſs Souls might ſee the Vanity of ſuch Defences; and conſider if ſuch a Worm as I can eaſily confute them, how eaſily and how terribly will they be all anſwered by their Judg?

2. I did it the rather, that godly Chriſtians might the better underſtand how to deal with theſe vain Excuſes when they meet with them: which will be daily, if they deal with Men in this ſad Condition.

X. We have done with that part of the Judgment which conſiſteth in the Exploration or Trial of the Cauſe: we now come to that which is the Concluſion and Conſummation of all; and that is, to ſhew you *what the Sentence will be, and on whom.*

And for this, we must go strait to the Word of God for our Light, it being impossible for any Man to have any particular Knowledg of it, if Christ had not there revealed it unto us. Indeed almost all the World do acknowledg a Life after this, where it shall go well with the Good, and ill with the bad. But who shall be then accounted *righteous*, and who *unrighteous*, and on what Terms and Grounds, by whom they shall be judged, and to what Condition, they know not.

The Sentence in Judgment will be, 1. Either on those that never had Means to know Christ. 2. Or on those that had.

1. For the former, as it less concerneth us to enquire of their Case, so it is more obscurely revealed to us in the Scripture. It is certain that they shall be judged according to their Use of the Means which they had, *Rom.* 2. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. and the Talents which they received, *Mat.* 25. But that it ever falleth out that he that hath but the one Talent of natural Helps, doth improve it to Salvation; or that ever they who knew not Christ, are justified and saved without that Knowledg, (being at Age and Use of Reason) I find not in the Scriptures. I find indeed that [as many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law: and as many as have sinned *in* the Law, shall be judged *by* the Law, *Rom.* 2. 12. but not that any are justified by the Works of Nature, such as are here said to be *without* Law.] I find also, that [They have the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another, in the Day *when* God shall judg the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel] *Rom.* 2. 15, 16. And I believe it is a *just Excuse*, and not an *unjust* which is here meant. But it will be but an *Excuse* so far as they were guiltless: and that will be but *in tanto*, and not *in toto*, in part only; and so not a full Justification. A Heathen's Conscience may excuse him from those Sins which he was

never

never guilty of; but not from all. But no more of them.

2. The Case of those that have had the Gospel, is more plainly opened to us in God's Word. Their *Sentence* is opened in many Places of Scripture, but most fully in *Matth.* 25. whence we will now collect it.

There we find that Jesus Christ the Redeemer, as King of the World, shall sit in Judgment on all Men at the last; and shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats, and so shall pass the final Sentence. This Sentence is twofold, according to the different Condition of them that are judged. To them on the right Hand, there is a Sentence of Justification, and Adjudication to everlasting Glory: To them on the left Hand, there is a Sentence of Condemnation to everlasting Punishment.

The Sentence on each of these containeth both the State which they are judged to, and the Reason or Cause of the Judgment to that State. For as God will not judg any to Life or Death without just Cause, so he will publish this Cause in his Sentence, as it is the manner of Judges to do. If you say, *Christ will not use a Voice*; let it satisfy, that though we know not the manner, yet if he do it but by mental Discovery, as he shews Men *what* shall everlastingly befal them, so he will shew them *why* it shall so befal them.

1. The *Sentence* on them on the *right* Hand, will contain, 1. Their Justification and Adjudication to *Blessedness*, and that both as generally denominated, and as particularly determined and described. 2. And the Cause of this Judgment.

1. In general they shall be pronounced *Blessed*. Satan would have had them cursed and miserable: the Law did curse them to Misery; many a fearful Thought hath possessed their own Breasts, lest they should prove at last accursed and miserable: but now they hear

hear the contrary from their Judg. All the Promises in the Gospel could not perfectly overcome those their Fears; all the comfortable Words of the Ministers of the Gospel could not perfectly subdue them; all the tender Mercies of God in Christ did not perfectly subdue them; but now they are vanquished all for ever. He that once had heard his Redeemer in Judgment call him *blessed*, will never fear being *cursed* more. For he that Christ blesseth, shall be *blessed* indeed.

The Description of their Blessedness followeth, *Come inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* And also they are called *Blessed of the Father.* Here is the Fountain of their Blessedness, the Father; and the State of their Blessedness in being the Father's: for I suppose they are called *the Blessed of the Father*, both because the Father blesseth them, that is, makes them Happy, and because these blessed Ones are the Father's *own.* And so Christ will publish it to the World in Judgment, that he came to glorify the Father, and will proclaim him the principal Efficient, and ultimate End of his Work of Redemption, and the Blessedness of his Saints; and that himself is (as Mediator) but the *Way* to the Father. It is the Father that *prepared* the Kingdom for them, and *from the Foundation of the World* prepared it; both for [them] as *chosen ones*, and for them as *future Believers and righteous Ones.* It is called a Kingdom, partly in respect to God the King, in whose Glory we shall partake in our Places; and partly metaphorically, from the Dignity of our Condition. For so it is that our selves are said to be made Kings, *Rev.* 1. 6. and 5. 1. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. and not that we are properly Kings; for then we must have Subjects who must be governed by us.

Thus we see their Blessedness in the Fountain, End and State of Dignity. As to the receptive Act on their Part, it is expressed by two Words; one signifying their first Entrance on it, *Come:* the other their *Possession, Inherit:* That is, possess it as given by the Father

ther, and Redeemed by the Son, and hold it in this Tenure for ever.

The true Believer was convinced in this Life, that indeed there was no true Bleſſedneſs, but this Enjoyment of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord revealed this to his Heart by his Word and Spirit: And therefore he contemned the ſeeming Happineſs on Earth, and laid up for himſelf a Treaſure in Heaven, and made him Friends with the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, and ventured all his Hope in this Veſſel. And now he findeth the Wiſdom of that Choice in a rich Return. God made him ſo *wiſe* a Merchant as to ſell all for this Pearl of greateſt Price: and therefore now he ſhall find the Gain. As there is no other true Happineſs but God in Glory; ſo is there nothing more *ſuitable* and *welcome* to the true Believer. O how welcome will the Face of that God be, whom he *loved*, *ſought*, *longed* and *waited* for! How welcome will that Kingdom be which he lived in *hope* of, which he parted with all for, and ſuffered for in the Fleſh! How glad will he be to ſee the bleſſed Face of his Redeemer, who by his manifold Grace hath brought him unto this! I leave the believing Soul to think of it, and to make it the daily matter of his delightful Meditation; what an unconceivable Joy in one Moment, will this Sentence of Chriſt will fill his Soul with? Undoubtedly it is now quite paſt our Comprehenſion; though our imperfect Forethoughts of it may well make our Lives a continual Feaſt.

Were it but our Juſtification from the Accuſations of Satan, who would have us condemned either as *Sinners* in general, or as impenitent, unbelieving Rebels, againſt him that redeemed us, in *ſpecial*, it would lift up the Heads of the Saints in that Day: After all the Fears of our own Hearts, and the ſlanderous Accuſations of Satan and the World, That we were either impenitent Infidels or Hypocrites, Chriſt will then juſtify us and pronounce us *righteous*. So much for the *Condition to which* they are judged.

2. The

2. The Reason or Cause of this Justification of the Saints, is given us both, 1. In a general Denomination, and 2. In a particular Description. 1. In general, it is because they were *righteous*, as is evident, *Mat.* 25. 46. *The Righteous shall go into Life everlasting.* And indeed it is the Business of every just Judg to justify the Righteous, and condemn the Unrighteous. And shall not the Judg of all the Earth judg righteously? *Gen.* 18. 25. God makes Men righteous before he judges them so: and judgeth them righteous *because* they are so. He that abominateth that Man who saith to the Righteous, Thou art wicked; or to the Wicked, Thou art righteous; who justifieth the Wicked and condemneth the Righteous, will certainly never do so himself.

Indeed he will justify them that are Sinners, but not against the Accusation *that they are Sinners*, but against the Accusation, that *they are guilty of Punishment for Sin:* but that is, because he first made them just; and so justifiable, by pardoning their Sin, through the Blood of Christ.

And it's true also, that he will justify those that *were wicked*, but not those that *are wicked:* but Judgment findeth them as Death leaveth them, and he will not take them for wicked, that are sanctified and cleansed of their former Wickedness. So that Christ will first pardon them before he justify them against the Charge of being Sinners in general; and he will first give Men Faith, Repentance and new Obedience, before he will justify them against the Charge of being Impenitent, Infidels or Hypocrites, and consequently unpardoned, and doubly guilty of Damnation. This twofold Righteousness he will first *give* Men, and so constitute them just, before he will *declare* it, and *sentence* them just.

2. The Reason of the Sentence, particularly described, is from their Faith and Love to Christ, expressed in their Obedience, Self-denial, and forsaking

all for him. *For I was hungry and ye fed me; I was thirsty and ye gave me dainк; I was a Stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me: I was ſick and ye viſited me: I was in Priſon and ye came to me. Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me,* Mat. 25. 35 to 41. Here is, 1. The cauſal Conjuction *for*. 2. And the Cauſe or Reaſon it ſelf.

Concerning both which, obſerve. 1. How it is that Man's Obedience and Self-denial is the Reaſon and Cauſe of his Juſtification. 2. Why it is that God will have the Reaſon or Cauſe thus declared in the Sentence.

For the firſt, obſerve that it's one thing to give a Reaſon of the Sentence, and another thing to expreſs the *Cauſe* of the *Benefit given* us by the Promiſe, and *judged* to us by the *Sentence*. Man's Obedience was no proper Cauſe why God did in this Life *give* Pardon of Sin to us, or a Right to Glory, much leſs of his giving Chriſt to die for us. And therefore as to our conſtitutive Juſtification at our Converſion, we muſt not *ſay* or *think* that God doth juſtify us, for, or *becauſe* of any Works of our Obedience, legal or evangelical. But when God hath ſo juſtified us, when he comes to give a Reaſon of his Sentence in Judgment, he may and will fetch that Reaſon partly from our Obedience, or our Performance of the Conditions of the new Covenant. For as in this Life, we had a Righteouſneſs conſiſting in free Pardon of all Sin through the Blood of Chriſt, and a Righteouſneſs conſiſting in our perſonal Performance of the Conditions of the Promiſe, which giveth that Pardon and continueth it to us: ſo at Judgment we ſhall accordingly be juſtified. And as our evangelical perſonal Righteouſneſs, commonly called *inherent*, was at firſt only in our Faith and Repentance, and Diſpoſition to obey, but afterward in our actual ſincere Obedience, in which Senſe we are conſtitutively juſtified or made righteous here by our Works,

in *James* his sense, *James* 2. 24. so accordingly a double Reason will be assigned of our sentential Justification; one from our Pardon by Christ's Blood and Merits, which will prove our Right to Impunity and to Glory; the other from our own Faith and holy Obedience, which will prove our Right to that Pardon through Christ, and to the free Gift of a Right to Glory: and so this last is to be pleaded in Subordination to the former. For Christ is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, *Heb.* 5. 9. He therefore that will be saved, must have a *Christ* to save him as the Author, and an *Obedience* to that Christ as the Condition of that Salvation; and consequently both must be declared in the Judgment.

The Reason why the Judg doth mention our good Works rather than our believing, may be because those holy self-denying Expressions of Faith and Love to Christ do contain or certainly imply Faith in them, as the Life of the Tree is in the Fruit: but Faith doth contain our Works of Obedience but only as their Cause. The Works also are a Part of the personal Righteousness which is to be enquired after, that is, we shall not be judged righteous, meerly because we have believed, but also because we have added to our Faith Vertue, and have improved our Talents, and have loved Christ to the hazard of all for his sake. For it is not only or principally for the Goodness of the Work considered in it self, or the Good that is done by it to the Poor; but it is as these Works did express our Faith and Love to Christ by doing him the most costly and hazardous Service; that by Faith we could see Christ in a poor Beggar or a Prisoner, and could love Christ in *these* better than our worldly Goods or Liberties, which we must part with, or hazard by the Works that are here mentioned.

2. The Reasons why Christ will so publickly declare the personal Righteousness of Men, to be the Reason or Cause of his justifying Sentence, is because

it is the Business of that Day, not only to glorify God's meer Love and Mercy, but eminently to glorify his remunerative Justice; and not only to express his Love to the Elect, as such, but to express his Love to them as *faithful* and *obedient*, and such as have denied all for Christ, and loved God above all; and to shew his Justice to Men, and Faithfulness in fulfilling all his Promises, and also his Holiness, in the high Estimation of the Holiness of his People. I shall express this in the Words of a Learned Divine (Dr. *Twiss* against Mr. *Cotton*, pag. 40.) *Was there no more in God's Intention when he elected some, than the Manifestation of the Riches of his glorious Grace? Did not God purpose also to manifest the Glory of his remunerative Justice? Is it not undeniable that God will bestow Salvation on all his Elect, (of ripe Years) by way of Reward, and Crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judg will give?* 2 Tim. 4. 2 Thess. 1. *It is great pity this is not considered, as usually it is not, especially for the momentous Consequence thereof in my Judgment.* So far he.

So much of the Sentence of Justification which shall be passed by Christ at Judgment upon the Righteous.

2. We are next to consider of the Sentence of Condemnation which shall then by Christ be passed on the Unrighteous. Which is delivered to us by Christ, *Mat.* 25. in the same Order as the former.

The Sentence containeth, 1. The Condemnation it self 2. The Reason or Cause of it.

The Condemnation expresseth the Misery which they are judged to. 1. Generally in the Denomination, *Cursed*. 2. Particularly by Description of their cursed State.

To be *cursed*, is to be a People destinated and adjudged to utter Unhappiness, to all kind of Misery without remedy.

2. heir *cursed* Condition is described in the next Words, *Depart from me into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* 1. De-

1. *Depart:* From whom? from the God that made them in his Image; from the Redeemer that bought them by the Price of his Blood, and offered to save them freely, for all their Unworthiness, and many a time intreated them to accept his Offer, that their Souls might live: From the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier and Comforter of the Faithful, who strove with their Hearts, till they quenched and expelled him. O sad *Departing!* who would not then choose rather to *depart* from all the Friends he had in the World, and from any thing imaginable; from his Life, from himself, if it were possible, than from Christ? *Depart:* from what? why from the Presence of the Judg, from all farther Hopes of Salvation for ever, from all possibility of ever being saved, and living in the joyful Inheritance of the Righteous. *Depart:* Not from God's Essential Presence, for that will be with them to their everlasting Misery, but from the Presence of his Grace in that Measure as they enjoyed it. *Depart:* Not from your fleshly Pleasures, and Honours, and Profits of the World; these were all gone and past already: and there was no farther need to bid them *depart* from these: Houses and Lands were gone. Mirth and Recreations were gone. Their sweet Morsels and Cups were gone. All the Honour that Men could give them was gone before they were set at Christ's Bar to be judged. But from all Expectations of ever enjoying these again, or ever *tasting* their former Delights; from these they must depart: not from their *Sin*, for that will go with them; but the Liberty of committing that part of it which was sweet to them, as Gluttony, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Idleness, and all Voluptuousness; from these they must *depart*. But this is consequential; it is Christ and the Possibility of Salvation, that they are sentenced to *depart* from.

But *whither* must they *depart?* 1. Into Fire. 2. Into *that* Fire which was prepared for the Devil and his Angels. 3. Into everlasting Fire.

1. Not into a *purifying*, but a *tormenting* Fire. Whether elementary or not; whether properly or metaphorically called *Fire*, let us not vainly trouble our ſelves to enquire. It is enough to know, that as Fire is one of the moſt grievous Tormentors of the Fleſh, ſo grievous will be thoſe infernal Torments to the whole Man, Soul and Body; ſuch as is moſt fitly repreſented to us under the Notion of *Fire*, and of *Burning*. It is eaſy for a ſecure unbelieving Soul to read and hear of it; but Wo and ten thouſand Woes to them that muſt endure it! In this Life they had their good things, when it went harder as to the Fleſh with better Men; but now they are tormented, when the Godly are comforted, as *Luke* 16. 25.

2. But why is it called *a Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels?* 1. What is this Devil that hath Angels? 2. Who are his Angels? 3. When was it prepared for them? 4. Was it not alſo prepared for wicked Men? To theſe in order.

1. It ſeems by many Paſſages in Scripture, that there is an Order among Spirits both good and bad; and that there is one Devil that is the Prince over the reſt.

2. It ſeems therefore that it's the reſt of the evil Spirits, that are called *his Angels*. And ſome think that the Wicked who ſerved him in this Life, ſhall be numbred with his Angels in the Life to come. Indeed the Apoſtle calls him *the God of this World*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. as is ordinarily judged by Expoſitors; and *the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Diſobedience*, Eph. 2. 2. And he calleth falſe ſeducing Teachers *the Miniſters of Satan*, 2 Cor. 11. 15. But that wicked Men are here meant as part of his Angels, is not clear.

3. If it be the Preparation of God's Purpoſe that is here meant, then it was from Eternity: but if it be any Commination of God as Ruler of the Angels, then was this Fire prepared for them conditionally, from the

the beginning of that Commination, and was *due* to them at their Fall.

4. It seems that the Reason why here is no mention of preparing Hell-fire for the Wicked, but only for the Devils, is not because indeed it *was not* prepared also for the Wicked; but to note that it is the Torment which was *first* prepared for, or assigned to the Devils, thereby shewing the greatness of the Misery of the Wicked, that the Devil and his Angels must be their Companions: Though some think, as is said before, that the Reason why wicked Men are not mentioned here, is, because they are part of the Angels of the Devil, and so included. And some think it is purposely to manifest God's general Love to Mankind, that prepared not Hell *for them*, but they cast themselves into the Hell prepared for the Devils. But the first seems to be the true sense.

And how apparently Righteous are the Judgments of the Lord! that those Men who would here entertain the Devil into their Hearts and daily Familiarity, should be then entertained by him into *his* Place of Torments, and there remain for ever in his Society! Though few entertained him into visible Familiarity with their Bodies as Witches do, who so make him their *Familiar*: yet all wicked Men do entertain him into more full and constant Familiarity with their Souls than these Witches do with their Bodies; how *familiar* is he in Thoughts, to fill them with Vanity, Lust or Revenge! How *familiar* is he in their Hearts, to fill them with Covetousness, Malice, Pride, or the like Evils! and to banish all Thoughts of returning to God, and to quench every Motion that tendeth to their Recovery! How *familiar* is he with them, even when they seem to be worshipping God in the publick Assemblies, stealing the Word out of their Hearts, filling them with vain and wandring Thoughts, blinding their Minds that they cannot understand the plainest words that we are able to speak to them, and filling them with a proud

Rebellion againſt the Direction of their Teachers, and an obſtinate Refuſal to be ruled by them, be the Matter never ſo neceſſary to their own Salvation? How *familiar* are theſe evil Spirits in their Houſes, filling them with Ignorance, Worldlineſs and Ungodlineſs, and turning out God's Service, ſo that they do not pray together once in a Day, or perhaps at all! How *familiarly* doth Satan uſe their Tongues, in Curſing, Swearing, Lying, Ribaldry, Backbiting or Slandring! And is it not juſt with God to make theſe Fiends their *Familiars* in Torment, with whom they entertained ſuch *Familiarity* in Sin? As Chriſt with all the bleſſed Angels and Saints will make but one Kingdom or Family, and ſhall live altogether in perpetual Delights; ſo the Devil and all his helliſh Angels and wicked Men ſhall make but one Houſhold, and ſhall live altogether in perpetual Miſery. O poor Sinners, you are not troubled now at his Preſence and Power in your Hearts! but will you not then be troubled at his Preſence and tormenting Power? As long as you do not *ſee* him, let him do what he will with you, it grieves you little or nothing at all; but what will you ſay when you *muſt ſee* him, and abide with him for ever? O Sirs, his Name is *eaſily* heard, but his Company will be terrible to the ſtouteſt Heart alive. He ſheweth you a ſmiling Face when he tempteth you, but he hath a grimmer Face to ſhew you, when Temptations have conquered you, and Torments muſt ſucceed. As thoſe that write of Witches, ſay, he appeareth at firſt to them in ſome comely tempting Shape, till he have them faſt tied to him; and then he beats them, and affrights them, and ſeldom appears to them but in ſome ugly Hew. Believe it, poor Sinners, you do not hear or ſee the worſt of him, when you are merry about your ſinful Pleaſures, and rejoicing in your Hopes of the Commodities or Preferments of the World: he hath another kind of Voice which you muſt hear, and another Face to ſhew you, that will make you know a *little* better

better whom you had to do with! You would be afraid now to meet him in the Dark: what will you be to live with him in everlasting Darkness? Then you will know who it was that you entertained and obeyed, and plaid with in your Sins.

3. And as the Text tells us, that it is *a Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels:* So it telleth us, that it is *an everlasting Fire.* It had a Beginning, but it shall have no End. If these Wretches would have chosen the Service of God, they would have met with no Difficulty or Trouble, but what would have had a speedy End. Poverty and Injuries would have had an End: Scorns and Abuses would have had an End: Fasting, Humiliation, Sorrow for Sin, watching and fighting against our spiritual Enemies, would all have had an End. But to avoid these, they chose that Ease, that Pleasure, which hath brought them to that Torment which *never* will have end. I have said so much of these things already in my Book called *the Saints Rest*, that I will now say but this much. It is one of the Wonders of the World, how Men that do believe, or think they do believe this Word of Christ to be true, that *the Wicked shall go into everlasting Fire*, can yet venture on Sin so boldly, and live in it so fearlessly, or sleep quietly till they are out of this unspeakable Danger! Only the commonness of it, and the known Wickedness of Man's Heart, doth make this less wonderful. And were there nothing else to convince us that Sinners are mad and dead as to spiritual Things, this were enough; that ever the greatest Pleasures or Profits of the World, or the most enticing Baits that the Devil can offer them, should once prevail with them to forget these endless things, and draw them to reject an everlasting Glory, and cast themselves desperately into *everlasting Fire:* Yea, and all this under daily Warnings and Instructions; and when it's told them beforehand by the God of Truth himself! For the Lord's sake, Sirs, and for your Souls sakes, if you

care not what Miniſters ſay, or what ſuch as I ſay, yet will you ſoberly read now and then this 25*th* Chapter of *Matthew*, and regard what is told you by him that muſt be your Judg! and now and then bethink your ſelves ſoberly, whether theſe are Matters for wiſe Men to make light of; and what it is to be *everlaſtingly in Heaven, or in Hell-fire.*

2. We have ſeen what is the Penalty contained in the Sentence againſt the Ungodly: The next thing that the Text directs us to, is the Cauſe or Reaſon of the Sentence, *ver.* 42. *For I was hungry, and ye gave me no Meat*, &c. The Reaſon is not given expreſly, either for their Sin againſt the Law of Works, that is, becauſe they were Sinners, and not perfectly *innocent*; nor yet from their Unbelief, which is the great Sin againſt the Law of Grace: But it is given from their not expreſſing their Faith and Love to Chriſt in Works of Mercy and Self-denial. And why is this ſo?

1. We muſt not ſuppoſe that theſe Words of Chriſt do expreſs the *whole* judicial Proceſs in every Point; but the chief Parts. It is ſuppoſed that all Men are convicted of being Sinners againſt the perfect Law of the Creator, and that they are guilty of Death for that Sin; and that there is no way but by Chriſt to obtain Deliverance. But becauſe all this muſt be acknowledged by the Righteous themſelves, as well as by the Wicked; therefore Chriſt doth not mention this, but that only which is the turning Point or Cauſe in the Judgment. For it is not all Sinners that ſhall be finally condemned, but all impenitent, unbelieving Sinners, who have rebelled finally againſt their Redeemer.

2. And the Reaſon why Faith it ſelf is not expreſſed, is, 1. Becauſe it is clearly implied, and ſo is Love to Chriſt as Redeemer; in that they ſhould have relieved *Chriſt* himſelf in his Members: That is, as it's expreſſed, *Mat.* 10. 42. they ſhould have received a Prophet in the

Name

Name of a Prophet, and a Disciple in the Name of a Disciple; all should be done for Christ's sake, which could not be, unless they believed in him, and loved him. 2. Also because that the bare Act of Believing is not all that Christ requireth to a Man's final Justification and Salvation; but holy self-denying Obedience must be added. And therefore this is given as the Reason of their Condemnation that they did not so obey.

We must observe also, that Christ here putteth the special for the general; that is, one way of self-denying Obedience and Expression of Love, instead of such Obedience in general: For all Men have not Ability to relieve those in misery, being perhaps some of them poor themselves. But all have that Love and Self-denial, which will some way express it self. And all have Hearts and a Disposition to do thus, if they had Ability; without such a Disposition none can be saved.

It is the fond Conceit of some, that if they have any Love to the Godly, or wish them well, it is enough to prove them happy. But Christ here purposely lets us know that whoever doth not love him at so high a rate, as that he can part with his Substance or any thing in the World, to those Uses which he shall require them, even to relieve his Servants in want and Sufferings for the Master's sake, that Man is none of Christ's Disciple, nor will be owned by him at the last.

XI. The next Point that we come to, is to shew you the *Properties* of this Sentence at Judgment.

When Man had broken the Law of his Creator at the first, he was liable to the Sentence of Death, and God presently sat in Judgment on him, and sentenced him to some part of the Punishment which he had deserved; but upon the Interposition of the Son, he before the rest, resolved on a Way that might tend to his Recovery; and Death is due yet to every Sinner for every Sin which he commits, till a Pardon do acquit

him;

him. But this Sentence which will pass on Sinners at the last Judgment, doth much differ from that which was passed on the first Sin, or which is due according to the Law of Works alone. For,

1. As to the Penalty, called the Pain of Loss, the first Judgment did deprive Man of the Favour of his Creator, but the second will deprive him of the Favour both of the Creator and Redeemer: the first Judgment deprived him of the Benefits of Innocency; the second deprives him of the Benefits of Redemption, the loss of his hopes and possibility of Pardon, of the Spirit, of Justification and Adoption, and of the Benefits which conditionally were promised and offered him; these are the Punishments of the last Judgment, which the Law of Works did never threaten to the first Man, or to any, as it stood alone.

Also the loss of Glory as recovered, is the proper Penalty of the violated Law of Grace, which is more than the first loss. As if a Man should lose his Purse the second time, when another hath once found it for him; or rather as if a Traitor redeemed by another, and having his Life and Honours offered him, if he will thankfully accept it and come in, should by his Refusal and Obstinacy, lose this recovered Life, which is offered him; which is an Addition to his former Penalty.

Besides that the higher Degree of Glory will be lost which Christ would bestow on him, more than was lost at first. The very Work of the Saints in Heaven, will to praise and glorify him that redeemed them, and the Father in him; which would not have been the Work of Man, if he had been innocent.

2. As to the Pain of Sense, the last Judgment by the Redeemer will sentence them to a far sorer Punishment than would have befaln them, if no Saviour had been offered them, *Heb.* 10. 29. The Conscience of *Adam* if he had not been redeemed, would never have tormented him for rejecting a Redeemer, nor for refusing

fusing or abusing his gracious Offers, and his Mercies; nor for the forfeiting of a recovered Happiness; nor for refusing of the easy Terms of the Gospel, which would have given him Christ and Salvation for the accepting; nor for neglecting any Means that tended to Recovery: no nor for refusing Repentance unto Life, nor for disobeying a Redeemer that bought him by his Blood. As all these are the Penalties of the Redeemer's Law and Judgment, so is it a sorer Penalty than Conscience would have inflicted meerly for not being perfectly innocent: and they will be far soarer Gripings and Gnawings of the never-dying Worm for the abuse of these Talents, than if we had been never trusted with any after our first Forfeiture. Yea and God himself will accordingly proportion his Punishments. So that you see that privatively and positively, or as to their Loss and their Feeling, the Redeemer will pass on them a heavier Doom than the Creator did, or would have done according to the first Law to perfect Man.

3. Another Property of the Judgment of Christ is, that *it will be final, peremptory, and excluding all farther Hopes or Possibilities of a Remedy.* So was not the first Judgment of the Creator upon fain Man. Though the Law of pure Nature knew no Remedy, nor gave Man any Hope of a Redeemer, yet did it not *exclude* a Remedy, nor put in any Bar against one; but God was free to recover his Creature if he pleased. But in the Law of Grace he hath resolved, that there shall be no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful looking for of Judgment and Fire which shall devour the Adversary, *Heb.* 10. 26, 27. and that the Fire shall be everlasting, the Worm shall not die, and the Fire shall not be quenched, *Mat.* 25. *ult.* *Mat.* 13. 42, 50. *John* 5. 27. *Mat.* 5. 26. *Mat.* 3. 12. and *Luke* 3. 17. *Mark* 9. 43, 44, 45, 46, 48. He that now breaketh that pure Law that requireth perfect Innocency, (as we have all done) may fly to the Promise of Grace in Christ, and

appeal

appeal to the Law of Liberty or Deliverance to be judged by that. But he that falls under the Penalty of that Law which ſhould have ſaved him, as all final Unbelievers and impenitent ungodly Perſons do, hath no other to appeal to. Chriſt would have been a Sanctuary and Refuge to thee from the Law of Works, hadſt thou but come in to him: But who ſhall be a Refuge to thee from the Wrath of Chriſt? The Goſpel would have freed thee from the Curſe of the Law of Works, if thou hadſt but believed and obeyed it: But what ſhall free thee from the Condemnation of the Goſpel? Had there no Accuſation lain againſt thee, but that thou waſt in general a Sinner; that is, that thou waſt not perfectly innocent, Chriſt would have anſwered that Charge by his Blood. But ſeeing thou art alſo guilty of thoſe ſpecial Sins which he never ſhed his Blood for, who ſhall deliver thee from that Accuſation? When Chriſt gave himſelf a Ranſom for Sinners, it was with this Reſolution both in the Father and himſelf, that none ſhould ever be pardoned, juſtified or ſaved by that Ranſom, that did not in the time of this Life ſincerely return to God by Faith in the Redeemer, and live in ſincere obedience to him, and perſevering herein. So that he plainly *excepted* final Infidelity, Impenitency and Rebellion from Pardon: He never died for the final Non-performance of the Conditions of the New Covenant. So that his Judgment for theſe will be peremptory and remedileſs. If you ſay, Why cannot God find out a Remedy for this Sin, as well as he did for the firſt? I ſay, God cannot lie, *Tit.* 1. 2. He muſt be true and faithful, as neceſſarily as he muſt be God, becauſe of the abſolute Perfection of his Nature; and he hath ſaid and reſolved, that there ſhall be no more Remedy.

Many other Properties of God's Judgment general there are, as that Righteouſneſs, Impartiality, Inflexibility, and the like, which becauſe I would not make my Diſcourſe too long, I will paſs over, contenting my

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ſelf with the mention of theſe which are proper to the Judgment of the Redeemer according to his own Laws in ſpecial.

XII. The twelfth and laſt thing which I promiſed to unfold, is, *The Execution of this Judgment.* Here I ſhould ſhew you both the Certainty of the Execution, and by whom it will be, and how: but having done all this already in the third Part of the foreſaid *Book of Reſt*, I ſhall now only give this brief Touch of it.

No ſooner is the dreadful Sentence paſt, *Go ye curſed into everlaſting Fire*, but away they muſt be gone: There is no delay, much leſs any Reprieve to be expected; and yet much leſs is there any hope of an Eſcape. If the Judg once ſay, *Take him Jailor*; and if Chriſt ſay, *Take him Devils, you that ruled and deceived him, now torment him:* all the World cannot reſcue one ſuch Soul. It will be in vain to look about for help. Alas, there is none but Chriſt can help you; and he will not, becauſe you refuſed his help: Nay, we may ſay, *He cannot*; not for want of Power, but becauſe he is True and Juſt, and therefore will make good that Word which you believed not. It is in vain then to cry to Hills to fall on you, and the Mountains to cover you from the Preſence of him that ſitteth on the Throne. It will be in vain now to repent, and wiſh you had not ſlighted your Salvation, nor ſold it for a little Pleaſure to your Fleſh. It will be then in vain to cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us; O ſpare us; O pity us; O do not caſt us into theſe hideous Flames! Do not turn us among Devils! Do not torment thy redeemed ones in this Fire!* All this will be then too late.

Poor Sinner, whoever thou art that readeſt or heareſt theſe Lines, I beſeech thee in Compaſſion to thy Soul, conſider how fearful the Caſe of that Man will be, that is newly doomed to the *Everlaſting Fire*, and is haled to the Execution without Remedy! And what mad

mad Men are thoſe that now do no more to prevent ſuch a Miſery, when they might do it on ſuch eaſy Terms, and now have ſo fair an Opportunity in their hands.

The time was when Repentance might have done thee good: but *then* all thy Repentings be in vain. *Now* while the Day of thy Viſitation laſteth, hadſt thou but a Heart to pray and cry for Mercy, in Faith and Fervency through Chriſt, thou mighteſt be heard. But then Praying and Crying will do no good, ſhouldſt thou roar out in the Extremity of thy Horror and Amazement, and beſeech the Lord Jeſus but to forgive thee one Sin, or to ſend thee on Earth once more, and to try thee once again in the Fleſh, whether thou wouldſt not love him, and lead a holy Life, it would be all in vain. Nay, ſhouldſt thou beg but one Hour before you were caſt into thoſe Flames, it would not be heard; it would do thee no good. How earneſtly did a deceaſed Gentleman, *Luke* 16. 24. beg of *Abraham* for one Drop of Water from the Tip of *Lazarus*'s Finger to cool his Tongue, becauſe he was tormented in the Flame: And what the better was he? He was ſent to remember that he had his good things in this Life; and that *Remembrance* would torment him more. And do not wonder or think much at this, that Chriſt will not then be entreated by the Ungodly. You ſhall then have a *Remember* too from Chriſt or Conſcience. He may ſoon ſtop thy Mouth, and leave thee ſpeechleſs, and ſay, *Remember Man, that I did one Day ſend thee a Meſſage of Peace, and thou wouldſt not hear it. I once did ſtoop to beſeech thee to return, and thou wouldſt not hear. I beſought thee by the tender Mercies of God; I beſought thee by all the Love that I had ſhewed theſe, by my holy Life, by my curſed Death, by the Riches of my Grace, by the Offers of my Glory; and I could not get thee to forſake the World, to deny the Fleſh, to leave one beloved Sin for all this. I beſought thee over and over again: I ſent many a Miniſter to thee in my Name: I waited on thee many a Day, and Year, and all would not do: thou wouldſt not conſider, return and live: and*

now

now it is too late, thy Sentence is past, and cannot be recalled: away from me thou Worker of Iniquity, Mat. 7. 22, 23.

Ah Sirs, what a Case then is the poor desperate Sinner left in! How can I write this, or how can you that read or hear it, without trembling, once think of the Condition that such forlorn Wretches will be in! When they look above them, and see the God that hath forsaken them, because they forsook him first; when they look about them, and see the Saints on one hand whom they despised, now sentenced unto Glory; and the Wicked on the other hand whom they accompanied and imitated, now judged with them to everlasting Misery: when they look below them, and see the Flames that they must abide in, even for evermore: and when the Devils begin to hale them to the Execution: O poor Souls! Now what would they give for a Christ, for a Promise, for a time of Repentance, for a Sermon of Mercy, which once they slept under, or made no account of! How is the Case altered now with them! Who would think that these are the same Men that made light of all this on Earth, that so stoutly scorned the Reproofs of the Word, that would be worldly, and fleshly, and drunk, and proud, let Preachers say what they would; and perhaps hated those that did give them warning. Now they are of another Mind; but all too late. O were there any Place for Resistance, how would they draw back, and lay hold of any thing, before they would be dragged away into those Flames! But there is no resisting; Satan's Temptations might have been resisted, but his Executions cannot: God's Judgments might have been prevented by Faith and Prayer, Repentance and a holy Life; but they cannot be resisted when they are not prevented. Glad would the miserable Sinner be, if he might but turn to *nothing*, and cease to *be*; or that he might be any thing rather than a reasonable Creature: but these Wishes are all in vain. *There is one Time, and one Way of*

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Sinner's Deliverance; if he fail in that one, he perisheth for ever: all the World cannot help him after that. 2 Cor. 6. 2. *I have heard thee in a time accepted: and in the Day of Salvation have I succoured thee: Behold now is the accepted Time; behold now is the Day of Salvation.* Now he saith, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold, I stand at the Door and knock; if any Man hear my Voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* But for the time to come hereafter, hear what he saith, *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsels, and would none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at your Calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Distress and Anguish cometh upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated Knowledg, and did not choose the Fear of the Lord; they would none of my Counsels: they despised all my Reproofs; therefore shall they eat of the Fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own Devices: for the turning away of the Simple shall slay them, and the Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them; but whoso hearkneth to me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of Evil.* I have recited all these Words that you may see and consider, whether I have spoke any other thing than God himself hath plainly told you of.

Having said this much of the *Certainty* of the Execution, I should next have spoke somewhat of the Manner and the Instruments, and have shewed how God will be for ever the principal Cause, and Satan and their own Consciences the Instruments in part; and in what manner Conscience will do its part, and how impossible it will be to quiet or resist it. But having spoke so much of all this already elsewhere, as is said before, I will forbear here to repeat it, leaving the Reader that desireth it, there to peruse it.

The Uses.

Use 1. Beloved Hearers, it was not to fill your Fancies with News that God sent me hither this Day: nor to tell you of Matters that nothing concern you: nor by some terrible Words to bring you to an Hour's Amazement and no more: But it is to tell you of things that your Eyes shall see, and to foretel you of your Danger while it may be prevented, that your precious Souls may be saved at the last, and you may stand before God with Comfort at that Day. But because this will not be every Man's Case, no nor the Case of most, I must in the Name of Christ desire you to make this Day an Enquiry into your own Souls, and as in the Presence of God let your Hearts make answer to these few Questions which I shall propound and debate with you.

Qu. 1. *Do you soundly believe this Doctrine which I have preached to you?* What say you Sirs? Do you verily *believe* it as a most certain Truth, that you and I, and all the World must stand at God's Bar and be judged to everlasting Joy or Torment? I hope you do all *in some sort* believe this: but blame me not if I be jealous whether you *soundly* believe it, while we see in the World so little of the Effect of such a Belief. I confess I am forced to think that there is more Infidelity than Faith among us, when I see more Ungodliness than Godliness among us: And I can hardly believe *that* Man that will say or swear that he believeth these things, and yet liveth as carelessly and carnally as an Infidel. I know that no Man can love to be damned; yea, I know that every Man that hath a reasonable Soul, hath naturally some love to himself, and a fear of a Danger which he verily apprehendeth: he therefore that liveth without all fear, I must think liveth without all apprehension of his Danger. Custom hath taught Men to hold

hold these things as the Opinion of the Country; but if Men soundly believed them, surely we should see stranger Effects of such a Faith, than in the most we do see. Doth the sleepy Soul that liveth in Security, and followeth this World as eagerly as if he had no greater Matters to mind; that never once trembled at the Thoughts of this great Day, nor once asked his own Soul in good Sadness, *My Soul, How dost thou think then to escape?* I say, doth this Man believe that he is going to this Judgment? Well Sirs, whether you believe it or not, you will find it true: and believe it you must before you can be safe. For if you do not believe it, you will never make ready. Let me therefore perswade you in the Fear of God to consider, that it is a Matter of undoubted Truth.

1. Consider that it is the express Word of the God of Truth, revealed in Scripture as plainly as you can desire. So that you cannot be unbelieving without denying God's Word, or giving him the Lie, *Mat.* 13. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 49, 50. *Mat.* 25. throughout, *Rom.* 2. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16. and 1. 32. *John* 5. 28, 29. *The Hour is coming in which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.* Heb. 9. 27. *It is appointed to all Men once to die, and after this the Judgment.* Rom. 14. 9, 12. *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* Rev. 20. 12. *And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God: and the Books were opened: and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the Dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books according to their Works.* Mat. 12. 36, 37. *But I say unto you that every idle Word that Men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the Day of Judgment: For by thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned.* Many more most express Texts of Scripture do put the Truth of this Judgment out of all question to all that believe the Scripture, and will under-

understand it. There is no place left for a Controversy in the Point: It is made as sure to us as the Word of the living God can make it: And he that will question that, what will he believe? What say you Sirs! Dare you doubt of this which the God of Heaven hath so positively affirmed? I hope you dare not.

2. Consider, it is a Master-part of your Faith, if you are Christians, and a fundamental Article of your Creed, that Christ shall come again to judg the quick and the dead. So that you must believe it or renounce your Christianity, and then you renounce Christ and all the Hopes of Mercy that you have in him. It's impossible that you should soundly believe in Christ, and not believe his Judgment and Life everlasting: because as he came to bring Life and Immortality to Light in the Gospel, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. so it was the End of his Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, to bring you thither; and it's part of his Honour and Office which he purchased with his Blood, to be the Lord and Judg of all the World, *Rom.* 14. 9. *Joh.* 5. 22. If therefore you believe not heartily this Judgment, deal plainly and openly, and say you are Infidels, and cast away the hypocritical Vizor of Christianity, and let us know you, and take you as you are.

3. Consider that it is a Truth that is known by the very Light of Nature, that there shall be a Happiness for the Righteous, and a Misery for the Wicked after this Life: which is evident,

1. In that we have undeniable natural Reason for it. (1.) God is the Righteous Governour of the World, and therefore must make a difference among his Subjects, according to the Nature of their Ways: which we see is not done here, where the Wicked prosper, and the Good are afflicted; therefore it must be hereafter. (2.) We see there is a Necessity that God should make Promises and Threatnings of everlasting Happiness or Misery, for the right Governing of the World: for we cer-

certainly perceive that no lower things will keep Men from destroying all humane Society, and living worse than brute Beasts; and if there be a Necessity of making such Threats and Promises, then there is certainly a Necessity of fulfilling them. For God needeth no Lie or Means of deceiving, to rule the World.

2. And as we see it by Reason, so by certain Experience, that this is discernable by the Light of Nature; for all the World, or almost all do believe it. Even those Nations where the Gospel never came, and have nothing but what they have by Nature, even the most barbarous Indians acknowledg some Life after this, and a Difference of Men according as they are here; therefore you must believe thus much, or renounce your common Reason and Humanity, as well as your Christianity. Let me therefore perswade you all in the Fear of God to confirm your Souls in the Belief of this, as if you had heard Christ or an Angel from Heaven say to you, *O Man, thou art hasting to Judgment.*

Qu. 2. My next Question is, *Whether you do ever soberly consider of this great Day?* Sirs, do you use when you are alone to think with your selves, how certain and how dreadful it will be, how fast it is coming on, and what you shall do, and what Answer you mean to make at that Day? Are your Minds taken up with these Considerations? Tell me, is it so or not?

Alas Sirs! Is this a Matter to be forgotten? Is not that Man even worse than mad, that is going to God's Judgment, and never thinks of it? when if they were to be tried for their Lives at the next Assize, they would think of it, and think again, and cast 100 times which way to escape. Methinks you should rather forget to go to Bed at Night, or to eat your Meat, or do your Work, than forget so great a Matter as this.

Truly I have often in my serious Thoughts been ready to wonder that Men can think of almost any thing

else.

else, when they have so great a thing to think of. What, forget that which you must remember for ever! forget that which should force Remembrance, yea and doth force it with some, whether they will or not! A poor despairing Soul cannot forget it: He thinks which way ever he goes he is ready to be judged. O therefore Beloved, fix these Thoughts as deep in your Hearts as Thoughts can go. O be like that holy Man, that thought which way ever he went, he heard the Trumpet sound, and the Voice of the Angel calling to the World, *Arise ye Dead, and come to Judgment.* You have warning of it from God and Man, to cause you to remember it; do not then forget it. It will be a cold Excuse another Day, *Lord, I forgat this Day, or else I might have been ready:* you dare not sure trust to such Excuses.

Qu. 3. My next Question to you is, *How are you affected with the Consideration of this Day?* Barely to think of it will not serve: to think of such a Day as this with a dull and senseless Heart, is a Sign of fearful Stupidity. Did the Knees of King *Belshazzar* knock together with trembling, when he saw the Hand-writing on the Wall? *Dan.* 5. 6. How then should thy Heart be affected that seeth the Hand-writing of God as a Summons to his Bar?

When I began to preach of these things long ago, I confess the Matters seemed to me so terrible, that I was afraid that People would have run out of their Wits with Fear; but a little Experience shewed me, that many are like a Dog that is bred up in a Forge or Furnace, that being used to it, can sleep though the Hammers are beating, and the Fire and hot Iron flaming about him, when another that had never seen it, would be amazed at the sight. When Men have heard us 7 Years together, yea 20 Years, to talk of a Day of Judgment, and they *see* it not, nor *feel* any hurt, they think it is but talk, and begin to make nothing of it.

This is their Thanks to God for his Patience: Because his Sentence is not executed speedily, therefore their Hearts are set in them to do evil, *Eccles.* 8. 11. As if God were slack of his Promise, as some Men account Slackness, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. when one Day with him is as a 1000 Years, and a 1000 Years as one Day. What if we tell you 20 Years together that you must die, will you not believe us, because you have lived so long, and seen no Death coming?

Three or Four things there be that should bring any Matter to the Heart. 1. If it be a Matter of exceeding Weight. 2. If it concern not others only, but our selves. 3. If it be certain. 4. If near.

All these things are here to be found, and therefore how should your Hearts be moved at the Consideration of this great Day!

1. What Matter can be mentioned with the Tongue of Man of greater moment? For the poor Creature to stand before his Maker and Redeemer, to be judged to everlasting Joy or Torment? Alas! all the Matters of this World are Plays, and Toys, and Dreams to this; Matters of Profit or Disprofit are nothing to it, Matters of Credit or Discredit are unworthy to be named with it; Matters of temporal Life or Death are nothing to it. We may see the poor brute Beasts go every Day to the Slaughter, and we make no great matter of it, though their Life be as dear to them as ours to us. To be judged to an *everlasting* Death or Torment, this is the great Danger that one would think should shake the stoutest Heart to consider it, and awake the dullest Sinner to prevent it.

2. It's a Matter that concerneth every one *of your selves*, and every Man or Woman that ever lived upon the Earth, or ever shall do; I am not speaking to you of the Affairs of some far Country that are nothing to you but only to marvel at; which you never saw, nor ever shall do: no, it is thy own self, Man or Woman, that hearest me this Day, that shalt as surely appear be-

fore

fore the Judgment-seat of Christ, as the Lord liveth, and as he is true and faithful; and that is as sure as thou livest on this Earth, or as the Heaven is over thee. That Man that heareth all this with the most careless blockish Heart, shall be awakened and stand with the rest at that Day; that Man that never thought of it, but spent his time in worldly Matters, shall leave all and there appear; that Man that will not believe these things to be true, but make a Jest of them, shall see and feel what he would not believe, and *he* also shall be there; the *Godly* that waited in Hope for that Day, as the Day of their full Deliverance and Coronation, they shall be there; those that have lain in the Dust these 5000 Years shall rise again, and all stand there. Hearer, whoever thou art, believe it, thou maist better think to live without Meat, to see without Light, to escape Death, and abide for ever on Earth, than to keep away from that Appearance. Willing or unwilling thou *shalt* be there. And should not a Matter then that so concerneth *thy self*, go near thy Heart, and awake thee from thy Security?

3. That it is a Matter of unquestionable Certainty, I have partly shewed you already, and more would do if I were preaching to known Infidels. If the careless World had any just Reason to think it were uncertain, their Carelessness were more excusable. Methinks a Man should be affected with that which he is certain shall come to pass, in a manner as if it were now in doing, 1 *Thess.* 5. 2. *Ye* perfectly *know that the Day of the Lord so cometh*, &c. saith the Apostle.

4. This Day is not only *certain*, but it is *near*; and therefore should affect you the more. I confess, if it were never so far off, yet seeing it will come at last, it should be carefully regarded: But when the Judg is at the Door, *James* 5. 9. and we are almost at the Bar, and it is so short a time to this Assize, what Soul that is not dead will be secure?

Alas Sirs! what is a little time when it is gone? how quickly shall you and I be all in another World, and our Souls receive their particular Judgment, and so wait till the Body be raised and judged to the same Condition? It is not 100 Years in all likelihood, till every Soul of us shall be in Heaven or Hell: and it's like, not half or a quarter of that time, but it will be so with the greater part of us; and what is a Year or two or 100? how speedily is it come? how many a Soul that is now in Heaven or Hell, within 100 Years dwelt in the Places that you now dwell in, and sat in the Seats you now *sit* in? And now their time is past, what is it? Alas, how quickly will it be so with us! You know not when you go to Bed, but you may be judged by the next Morning; or when you rise, but you may be judged before Night: but certainly you know that shortly it will be; and should not this then be laid to Heart? Yea the general Judgment will not be long: For certainly we live in the End of the World.

Qu. 4. My next Question is, *Whether are you ready for this dreadful Judgment when it comes, or not?* Seeing it is *your selves* then must be tried, I think it concerns you to see that you be prepared. How often hath Christ warned us in the Gospel, that we be *always ready*, because we know not the Day or Hour of his coming? *Matth.* 24. 44, 42. and 25. 13. 1 *Thess.* 5. 6. and told us how sad a time it will be to those that are unready, *Mat.* 25. 11, 12. Did Men but well know what a Meeting and Greeting there will be between Christ and an unready Soul, it would sure startle them, and make them look about them. What say you, beloved Hearers, are you *ready* for Judgment, or are you not? Me thinks a Man that knoweth he shall be judged, should ask himself the question every day of his Life; am I ready to give up my Account to God? Do not you use to ask this of your own Hearts? unless you be careless

whether you be saved or damned, methinks you should, and ask it *seriously*.

Qu. *But who be they that are ready? how shall I know whether I be ready or not?*

Answ. There is a twofold Readiness. 1. When you are in a *safe* Case. 2. When you are in a *comfortable* Case, in regard of that Day. The latter is very *desirable*, but the first is of *absolute Necessity*: this therefore is it that you must principally enquire after.

In general, all those, and only those are ready for Judgment, who shall be justified and saved, and not condemned when Judgment comes; they that have a good Cause in a Gospel-sense. It may be known before hand who these are; for Christ judgeth, as I told you, by his Law. And therefore find out whom it is that the Law of Grace doth justify or condemn, and you may certainly know whom the Judg will justify or condemn; for he judgeth righteously.

If you further ask me who these are; remember that I told you before that every Man that is personally righteous by fulfilling the Conditions of Salvation in the Gospel, shall be saved; and he that is found unrighteous, as having not fulfilled them, shall perish at that Day.

Qu. *Who are those?*

Answ. I will tell you them in a few Words, lest you should forget, because it is a Matter that your Salvation or Damnation dependeth upon.

1. The Soul that unfeignedly repenteth of his former sinful Course, and turneth from it in Heart and Life, and loveth the Way of Godliness which he hated, and hateth the Way of Sin which he loved, and is become throughly a new Creature, being born again and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, shall be justified: but all others shall certainly be condemned.

Good News to repenting converted Sinners: but sad to impenitent, and him that knows not what this means.

2. That Soul that feeling his Misery under Sin, and the Power of Satan, and the Wrath of God, doth believe what Christ hath done and suffered for Man's Restauration and Salvation, and thankfully accepteth him as his only Saviour and Lord, on the Terms that he is offered in the Gospel, and to those Ends, even to justify him, and sanctify and guide him, and bring him at last to everlasting Glory; that Soul shall be justified at Judgment: and he that doth not, shall be condemned.

Or in short, in Scripture-phrase, *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned*, Mar. 16. 16.

3. The Soul that hath had so much Knowledg of the Goodness of God, and his Love to Man in Creation, Redemption, and the following Mercies, and hath had so much Conviction of the Vanity of all Creatures, as thereupon to love God more than *all* things below, so that *he* hath the chiefest room in the Heart, and is preferred before all Creatures ordinarily in a time of trial; that Soul shall be justified at Judgment, and all others shall be condemned.

4. That Soul that is so apprehensive of the absolute Soveraignty of God as Creator and Redeemer, and of the Righteousness of his Law and the Goodness of his holy Way, as that he is firmly resolved to obey him before all others, and doth accordingly give up himself to study his Will, of purpose that he may obey it, and doth walk in these holy Ways, and hath so far mortified the Flesh, and subdued the World and the Devil, that the Authority and Word of God can do more with him than any other; and doth ordinarily prevail against all the Perswasion and Interest of the Flesh, so that the main Scope and Bent of the Heart and Life is still for God; and when he sinneth he riseth again by true Repentance; I say, that Soul, and that only, shall be justified in Judgment, and be saved.

5. That

5. That Soul that hath such believing Thoughts of the Life to come, that he taketh the promised Blessedness for his Portion, and is resolved to venture all else upon it, and in hope of this Glory, doth set light comparatively by all things in this World, and waiteth for it as the End of this Life, choosing any suffering that God shall call him to, rather than to lose his hopes of that Felicity, and thus perseverеth to the End: I say, that Soul, and none but that, shall be justified in Judgment and escape Damnation.

In these five Marks I have told you truly and briefly, who shall be justified and saved, and who shall be condemned at the Day of Judgment. And if you would have them all in five Words, they are but the Description of these five Graces, Repentance, Faith, Love, Obedience, Hope.

But though I have laid these close together for your use, yet lest you should think that in so weighty a Case I am too short in the Proof of what I so determine of, I will tell you in the express Words of many Scripture Texts, who shall be justified, and who shall be condemned.

[*John* 3. 3. Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. *Heb.* 12. 14. Without Holiness none shall see God. *Luke* 13. 3, 5. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. *Acts* 26. 18. I send thee to open their Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of Sins, and an Inheritance among the sanctified by Faith that is in me. *John* 3. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Whoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life: he that believeth on him, is not condemned; he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God; and this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their deeds were evil. *John* 5. 28, 29. The H

is coming, in which all that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Reſurrection of Damnation. *Mat.* 25. 30. Caſt the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth. *Luke* 19. 27. But thoſe mine Enemies which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither and ſlay them before me. *Mat.* 22. 12, 13. Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having on a Wedding-Garment? And he was ſpeechleſs. Then ſaid the King to the Servants, bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs, *&c.* *Mat.* 5. 20. For I ſay unto you, that except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Mat.* 7. 21. Not every one that ſaith, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. *Heb.* 5. 6. He is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him. *Rev.* 22. 14. Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in by the Gate into the City. *Rom.* 8. 1, 13. There is then no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, that walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit. For if ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live. *Rom.* 8. 9. If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. *Gal.* 5. 18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the Law. *Gal.* 6. 7, 8. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap: for he that ſoweth to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life Everlaſting. *Mat.* 6. 21. For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.] Read *Pſal.* 1. and many other Texts to this purpoſe, of which ſome are

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cited in my Directions for Peace of Conscience ; *Dir.* 11. *p.* 115, 116.

And thus I have told you from God's Word, how you may know whether you are ready for Judgment, which is the fourth thing that I would advise you to enquire after.

O Sirs, what shift do you make to keep your Souls from continual Terrors, as long as you remain unready for Judgment? How do you keep the Thoughts of it out of your Mind, that they do not break your Sleep, and meet you in your Business, and haunt you every way you go, while Judgment is so near, and you are so unready? But I shall proceed to my next Question.

Qu. 5. And in the last place, to those of you that are not yet ready, nor in a Condition wherein you may be safe at that Day; my Question is, *How are you resolved to prepare for Judgment for the time to come?* Will you do no more than you have done hitherto? Or will you now set your selves with all your Might, to prepare for so great a Day? methinks you should be now past all Demurs, Delays, or farther Doubtings about such a Business; and by the Consideration of what I have said already, you should be fully resolved to lose no more time, but presently awake, and set upon the Work. Methinks you should all say, We will do any thing that the Lord shall direct us to do, rather than we will be unready for this final Doom. O that there were but such Hearts in you, that you were truly *willing* to follow the gracious Guidance of the Lord, and to use but those sweet and reasonable Means which he hath prescribed you in his Word, that you may be ready for that Day! Alas, it is no hard matter for me to tell you, or my self, what it is that we must do if we will be happy; and it is no very hard matter to *do* it so far as we are truly *willing*; but the Difficulty is to be *truly* and *throughly willing* to this Work. If I shall tell you what you

must do for Preparation, shall I not lose my Labour? Will you resolve and promise in the Strength of Grace, that you will faithfully and speedily endeavour to practise it, whoever shall gainsay it? Upon hope of this, I will set you down some brief Directions, which you must follow, if ever you will with Comfort look the Lord Jesus in the Face at the Hour of Death, or in the Day of Judgment.

The first Direction is this, *See that your Souls be sincerely established in the Belief of this Judgment and everlasting Life:* For if you do not soundly believe it, you will not seriously prepare for it. If you have the Judgment and Belief of an Infidel, you cannot have the Heart or the Life of a Christian. Unbelief shuts out the most of the World from Heaven: see that it do not so by you. If you say you cannot believe what you would: I answer, Feed not your Unbelief by Wilfulness or Unreasonableness; use God's Means to overcome it, and shut not your Eyes against the Light, and then try the Issue, *Heb.* 3. 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

The second Direction. *Labour diligently to have a sound Understanding of the Nature of the Laws and Judgment of God.* On what Terms it is that he dealeth with Mankind: and on what Terms he will judg them to Life or Death: and what the Reward and Punishment is. For if you know not the Law by which you must be judged, you cannot know how to prepare for the Judgment. Study the Scripture therefore, and mark who they be that God promiseth to save, and who they be that he threatneth to condemn. For according to that Word will the Judgment pass.

The third Direction. *See that you take it as the very Business of your Lives, to make ready for that Day.* Understand that you have no other Business in this World, but what doth necessarily depend on this. What else have

have you to do, but to provide for everlasting, and to use Means to sustain your own Bodies and others, of purpose for this Work, till it be happily done? Live therefore as Men that make this the main Scope and Care of their Lives; and let all things else come in but on the by. Remember every Morning when you awake, that you must spend that Day in Preparation for your Account, and that God doth give it you for that end. When you go to Bed, examine your Hearts, what you have done that Day in the Preparation for your last Day: And take that time as lost which doth nothing to this end.

The fourth Direction. *Use frequently to think of the Certainty, Nearness and Dreadfulness of that Day, to keep Life in your Affections and Endeavours, lest by Inconsiderateness your Souls grow stupid and negligent.* Otherwise, because it is out of sight, the Heart will be apt to grow hardned and secure. And do not think of it slightly, as a common thing, but purposely set your selves to think of it, that it may rouze you up to such Affections and Endeavours as in some measure are answerable to the Nature of the thing.

The fifth Direction. *Labour to have a lively Feeling on thy Heart, of the Evil and Weight of that Sin which thou art guilty of, and of the Misery into which it hath brought thee, and would further bring thee if thou be not delivered, and so to feel the Need of a Deliverer.* This must prepare thee to partake of Christ now; and if thou partake not of him now, thou canst not be saved by him then. It is these Souls that now make *light* of their Sin and Misery, that must then feel them so *heavy*, as to be pressed by them into the infernal Flames. And those that *now* feel little need of a Saviour, they shall *then* have none to save them, when they feel their Need.

The sixth Direction. *Understand and believe the sufficiency of that Ransom and Satisfaction to Justice, which Christ hath made for thy Sins and for the World, and how freely and universally it is offered in the Gospel.* Thy Sin is not uncurable or unpardonable, nor thy Misery remediless; God hath provided a Remedy in his Son Christ, and brought it so near thy Hands, that nothing but thy neglecting, or wilful refusing it, can deprive thee of the Benefit. Settle thy Soul in this Belief.

The seventh Direction. *Understand and believe, that for all Christ's Satisfaction, there is an absolute Necessity of sound Faith and Repentance to be in thy own self, before thou canst be a Member of him, or be pardoned, adopted or justified by his Blood.* He died not for final Infidelity and Impenitency, as predominant in any Soul. As the Law of his Father which occasioned his Suffering, required perfect Obedience or Suffering: So his own Law, which he hath made for the Conveyance of his Benefits, doth require yet true Faith and Repentance of Men themselves, before they shall be pardoned by him; and sincere Obedience and Perseverance, before they shall be glorified.

The eighth Direction. *Rest not therefore in an unrenewed, unsanctified State; that is, till this Faith and Repentance be wrought on thy own Soul, and thou be truly broken off from thy former sinful Course, and from all things in this World; and art dedicated, devoted and resigned unto God.* Seeing this Change *must* be made, and these Graces *must* be had, or thou must certainly perish: in the Fear of God, see that thou give no ease to thy Mind till thou art thus changed. Be content with nothing till this be done. Delay not another Day. How canst thou live merrily, or sleep quietly in such a Condition, as if thou shouldst die in it, thou shouldst perish for ever? Especially when thou art every Hour uncertain whether thou shalt see

another Hour, and not be presently snatch'd away by Death. Methinks while thou art in so sad a Case, which way ever thou art going, or whatever thou art doing, it should still come into thy Thoughts, *O what if I should die before I be regenerate, and have part in Christ!*

The ninth Direction. *Let it be the daily Care of thy Soul, to mortify thy fleshly Desires, and overcome this World; and live as in a continual Conflict with Satan, which will not be ended till thy Life do end.* If any thing destroy thee by drawing away thy Heart from God, it will be thy carnal Self, thy fleshly Desires, and the Allurements of this World, which is the Matter that they feed upon. This therefore must be the earnest Work of thy Life to subdue this Flesh, and set light by this World, and resist the Devil, that by these would destroy thee. It is the common Case of miserable Hypocrites, that at first they list themselves under Christ as for a Fight, but they presently forget their State and Work; and when they are once in their own Conceit regenerate, they think themselves so safe, that there is no farther Danger; and thereupon they do lay down their Arms, and take that which they miscall their Christian Liberty, and indulge and please that Flesh which they promised to mortify, and close with the World which they promised to contemn, and so give up themselves to the Devil, whom they promised to fight against. If once you apprehend that all your Religion lieth in meer Believing, that all shall go well with you, and that the Bitterness of Death is past, and in a forbearance of some disgraceful Sins, and being much in the Exercise of your Gifts, and in external Ways of Duty, and giving God a cheap and plausible Obedience in those things only which the Flesh can spare; you are then fain into that deceitful Hypocrisy, which will as surely condemn you, as open Profaneness, if you get not out of it. You must live as in a Fight,

or you cannot overcome. You *muſt* live looſe from all things in *this World*, if you will be ready for *another*. You *muſt* not live after the Fleſh, but mortify it by the Spirit, if you would not die, but live for ever, *Rom.* 8. 13. Theſe things are not indifferent, but of flat Neceſſity.

The tenth Direction. *Do all your Works as Men that muſt be judged for them.* It is not enough (at leaſt in point of Duty and Comfort) that you judg this Preparation in general to be the main Buſineſs of your Lives, but you ſhould alſo order your *particular Actions* by theſe Thoughts, and meaſure them by their *Reſpects* to this approaching Day. Before you venture on them, enquire whether they will bear weight in Judgment, and be ſweet or bitter when they are brought to Trial; both for Matter and Manner, this muſt be obſerved. O that you would remember this when Temptations are upon you, when you are tempted to give up your Minds to the World, and drown your ſelves in earthly Cares: Will you bethink you ſoberly whether you would hear of this at Judgment, and whether the World will be then as ſweet as now, and whether this be the beſt Preparation for your Trial? When you are tempted to be drunk, or to ſpend your precious time in Ale-houſes, or vain unprofitable Company, or at Cards or Dice, or any ſinful or needleſs Sports; bethink you then, whether this will be comfortable at the reckoning? and whether time be no more worth to one that is ſo near Eternity, and muſt make ſo ſtrict an Account of his Hours? and whether there be not many better Works before you, in which you might ſpend your time to your greater Advantage, and to your greater Comfort when it comes to a review? When you are tempted to Wantonneſs, Fornication, or any other fleſhly Intemperance, bethink you ſoberly, with what Face theſe Actions will appear at Judgment, and whether they will be *then* pleaſant or diſpleaſant to you. So

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when you are tempted to neglect the daily Worshipping of God in your Families, and the catechising and teaching of your Children or Servants, especially on the Lord's Day, bethink your selves then, what account you will give of this to Christ, when he that entrusted you with the Care of your Children and Servants, shall call you to a reckoning for the Performance of that Trust?

The like must be remembred in the very manner of our Duties. How diligently should a Minister study; how earnestly should he perswade; how unweariedly should he bear all Oppositions and ungrateful Returns; and how carefully should he watch over each particular Soul of his Charge (as far as is possible) when he remember that he must shortly be accountable for all in Judgment? and how importunate should we all be with Sinners for their Conversion, when we consider that we our selves also must shortly be judged? Can a Man be cold and dead in Prayer, that hath any true Apprehension of that Judgment upon his Mind, where he must be accountable for all his Prayers and Performances? O remember, and seriously remember, when you stand before the Minister to hear the Word, and when you are on your Knees to God in Prayer, in what a manner that same Person, even your selves, must shortly stand at the Bar of the dreadful God! Did these Thoughts get throughly to Mens Hearts, they would awaken them out of their sleepy Devotions, and acquaint them that it is a serious Business to be a Christian. How careful should we be of our Thoughts and Words, if we believingly remembred that we must be accountable for them all! How carefully should we consider what we do with our Riches, and with all that God giveth us? and how much more largely should we expend it for his Service in Works of Piety and Charity, if we believingly remembred that we must be judged according to what we have done, and give account of every Talent that we receive? Certainly the believing Consideration of

Judgment,

judgment, might make us all better Christians than we are, and keep our Lives in a more innocent and profitable Frame.

The eleventh Direction. *As you will certainly renew your Failings in this Life, so be sure that you daily renew your Repentance, and fly daily to Christ for a renewed Pardon, that no Sin may leave its sting in your Souls.* It is not your *first* Pardon that will serve the turn for your *latter* Sins. Not that you must *purpose* to *sin*, and *purpose* to *repent* when you have done, as a Remedy: for that is an hypocritical and wicked *Purpose* of Repenting, which is made a Means to maintain us in our Sins; but Sin must be avoided as far as we can; and Repentance and Faith in the Blood of Christ must remedy that which we could not avoid. The Righteousness of Pardon in Christ's Blood is useful to us only so far as we are Sinners, and cometh in where our imperfect inherent Righteousness doth come short; but must not be purposely chosen before Innocency: I mean, we must rather choose as far as we can, to obey and be innocent, than to sin and be pardoned, if we were sure of Pardon.

The twelfth Direction. In this vigilant, obedient, penitent Course, with Confidence upon God as a Father, rest upon the Promise of Acceptance and Remission, through the Merits and Intercession of him that redeemed you: Look up in hope to the Glory that is before you, and believe that God will make good his Word, and the patient Expectation of the Righteous shall not be in vain. Chearfully hold on in the Work that you have begun: and as you serve a better Master than you did before your Change, so serve him with more Willingness, Gladness and Delight. Do not entertain hard Thoughts of him, or of his Service, but rejoice in your unspeakable Happiness of being admitted into his Family and Favour through Christ. Do not serve him in drooping Dejection and Discourage-

ment, but with Love, and Joy, and filial Fear. Keep in the Communion of his Saints, where he is chearfully and faithfully praised and honoured, and where is the greatest visible Similitude of Heaven upon Earth; especially in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Christ's Supper, where he seals up a renewed Pardon in his Blood, and where unanimously we keep the Remembrance of his Death until he come. Do not cast your selves out of the Communion of the Saints, from whom to be cast out by just Censure and Exclusion, is a dreadful Emblem and Fore-runner of the Judgment to come, where the Ungodly shall be cast out of the Presence of Christ and his Saints for ever.

I have now finished the Directions, which I tender to you for your Preparation for the Day of the Lord; and withal my whole Discourse on this weighty Point. What Effect all this shall have upon your Hearts, the Lord knows; it is not in my Power to determine. If you are so far blinded and hardned by Sin and Satan, as to make light of all this, or coldly to commend the Doctrine, while you go on to the End in your carnal worldly Condition as before; I can say no more, but tell thee again that Judgment is near, when thou wilt bitterly bewail all this too late. And among all the rest of the Evidence that comes in against thee, this Book will be one which shall testify to thy Face before Angels and Men, that thou wast told of that Day, and intreated to prepare.

But if the Lord shall shew thee so much Mercy as to open thy Eyes, and break in upon thy Heart, and by sober Consideration turn it to himself, and cause thee faithfully to take the Warning that hath been give thee, and to obey these Directions, I dare assure thee from the Word of the Lord, that this Judgment which will be so dreadful to the Ungodly, and the Beginning of their endless Terrour and Misery, will be as joyful to thee, and the Beginning of thy Glory. The Saviour that thou hast believed in and sincerely

obeyed

obeyed, will not condemn thee, *Psal.* 1. 5, 6. *Rom.* 8. 1. *John* 3. 16. It is part of his Business to justify thee before the World, and to glorify his Merits, his Kingly Power, his Holiness, and his rewarding Justice in thy Absolution and Salvation. He will account it a righteous thing to recompense Tribulation to thy Troublers, and Rest to thy self; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power: Even then shall he come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that Day; even because his Servants Testimony, and his Spirits among them was believed, 2 *Thess.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. That Day will be the great Marriage of the Lamb, and the Reception of thee, and all the Saints into the Glory of thy Beloved, to which they had a Right at their first Consent and Contract upon Earth: And when the Bridegroom comes, thou who art ready shalt go into the Marriage, when the Door shall be shut against the sleepy negligent World; and though they *cry, Lord, Lord, open to us*, they shall be repulsed with a *Verily I know you not*, *Mat.* 25. 10, 11, 12, 13. For this Day which others fear, mayest thou long, and hope, and pray, and wait, and comfort thy self in all Troubles with the Remembrance of it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 57, 58. 1 *Thess.* 4. 17, 18. If thou wert ready to be offered to Death for Christ, or when the time of thy Departing is at hand, thou mayest look back on the good Fight which thou hast fought, and on the Course which thou hast finished, and on the Faith which thou hast kept, and mayest confidently conclude, that henceforth there is laid up for thee *a Crown of Righteousness*, which *the Lord the Righteous Judg* shall give thee at that Day; and not to thee only, but unto all them also that love his Appearing, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *Even so, come Lord Jesus*, Rev. 22. 20.

The Danger of slighting Christ and his Gospel.

Mat. 22. 5. *But they made light of it.*

THE blessed Son of God, that thought not enough to die for the World, but would himself also be the Preacher of Grace and Salvation, doth comprize in this Parable the Sum of his Gospel. By the King that is here said to make the Marriage, is meant God the Father that sent his Son into the World to cleanse them from their Sins, and espouse them to himself. By his Son for whom the Marriage is made, is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who took to his God-head the Nature of Man, that he might be capable of being their Redeemer when they had lost themselves in Sin. By the Marriage is meant the Conjunction of Christ to the Soul of Sinners, when he giveth up himself to them to be their Saviour, and they give up themselves to him as his redeemed Ones, to be saved and ruled by him; the Perfection of which Marriage will be at the Day of Judgment, when the Conjunction between the whole Church and Christ shall be solemnized. The Word here translated *Marriage*, rather signifieth the *Marriage-Feast*; and the meaning is, that the World is invited by the Gospel to come in and partake of Christ and Salvation, which comprehendeth both Pardon, Justification and Right to Salvation, and all other Privileges of the Mem-

bers of Christ. The *Invitation* is God's Offer of Christ and Salvation in the Gospel; the Servants that invite them are the Preachers of the Gospel, who are sent forth by God to that end; the Preparation for the Feast there mentioned, is the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the enacting of a Law of Grace, and opening a Way for revolting Sinners to return to God. There is a mention of sending second Messengers, because God useth not to take the first Denial, but to exercise his Patience till Sinners are obstinate. The first Persons invited are the Jews; upon their obstinate Refusal they are sentenced to Punishment; and the Gentiles are invited, and not only invited, but by powerful Preaching, and Miracles, and effectual Grace compelled, that is, infallibly prevailed with to come in. The Number of them is so great, that the House is filled with the Guests; many come sincerely, not only looking at the Pleasure of the Feast, that is, at the Pardon of Sin, and Deliverance from the Wrath of God, but also at the Honour of the Marriage, that is, of the Redeemer, and their Profession by giving up themselves to an holy Conversation: but some come in only for the Feast, that is, Justification by Christ, having not the Wedding-garment of sound Resolution for Obedience in their Life, and looking only at themselves in believing, and not to the Glory of their Redeemer: and these are sentenced to everlasting Misery, and speed as ill as those that came not in at all; seeing a Faith that will not work, is but like that of the Devil; and they that look to be pardoned and saved by it, are mistaken, as *James* sheweth, *ch.* 2. 24.

The Words of my Text contain a Narration of the ill Entertainment that the Gospel findeth with many to whom it is sent, even after a first and second Invitation. They make light of it, and are taken up with other things. Though it be the Jews that were first guilty, they have too many followers among us Gentiles to this Day.

Doct.

Doct. *For all the wonderful Love and Mercy that God hath manifested in giving his Son to be the Redeemer of the World, and which the Son hath manifested in redeeming them by his Blood; for all his full Preparation, by being a sufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of all; for all his personal Excellencies, and that full and glorious Salvation that he hath procured; and for all his free Offers of these, and frequent and earnest Invitation of Sinners: yet many do make light of all this, and prefer their worldly Enjoyments before it. The ordinary Entertainment of all is by Contempt.*

Not that all do so, or that all continue to do so who were once guilty of it: for God hath his Chosen whom he will compel to come in. But till the Spirit of Grace overpower the dead and obstinate Hearts of Men, they hear the Gospel as a common Story, and the great Matters contained in it go not to the Heart.

The Method in which I shall handle this Doctrine is this.

1. I shall shew you what it is that Men make light of.
2. What this Sin of making light of it is.
3. The Cause of the Sin.
4. The Use of the Doctrine.

I. The thing that carnal Hearers make light of, is, 1. The Doctrine of the Gospel it self, which they hear regardlesly. 2. The Benefits offered them therein: which are, 1. Christ himself. 2. The Benefits which he giveth.

Concerning Christ himself, the Gospel, 1. Declareth his Person and Nature, and the great things that he hath done and suffered for Man; his redeeming him from the Wrath of God by his Blood, and procuring a Grant of Salvation with himself. Furthermore, the same Gospel maketh an Offer of Christ to Sinners, that if they will accept him on his easy and reasonable Terms, he will be their Saviour, the Physician of their Souls, their Husband and their Head.

2. The

2. The Benefits that he offereth them, are these. 1. That with these blessed Relations to him, himself, and Interest in him, they shall have the Pardon of all their Sins past, and be saved from God's Wrath, and be set in a sure way of obtaining a Pardon for all the Sins that they shall commit hereafter, so they do but obey sincerely, and turn not again unto the Rebellion of their Unregeneracy. 2. They shall have the Spirit to become their Guide and Sanctifier, and to dwell in their Souls, and help them against their Enemies, and conform them more and more to his Image, and heal their Diseases, and bring them back to God. 3. They shall have Right to everlasting Glory when this Life is ended, and shall be raised up thereto at the last; besides many excellent Privileges in the Way, in Means, Preservation and Provision, and the Foretaste of what they shall enjoy hereafter: all these Benefits the Gospel offereth to them that will have Christ on his reasonable Terms. The Sum of all is in 1 *John* 5. 11, 12. *This is the Record that God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son: He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son hath not Life.*

II. *What this Sin of making light of the Gospel is?* 1. To make light of the Gospel, is to take no great heed to what is spoken, as if it were not a certain Truth, or else were a Matter that little concerned them, or as if God had not written these things for them. 2. When the Gospel doth not *affect* Men, or go to their *Hearts*; but though they seem to attend to what is said, yet Men are not *awakened* by it from their Security, nor doth it work in any measure such holy Passion in their Souls, as Matters of such everlasting Consequence should do; this is making light of the Gospel of Salvation. When we tell Men what Christ hath done and suffered for their Souls, and it scarce moveth them: We tell them of keen and cutting Truths, but nothing will pierce them; we can make them hear, but we

cannot

cannot make them feel; our Words take up in the Porch of their Ears and Fancies, but will not enter into the inward Parts; as if we spake to Men that had no Hearts or Feeling; this is a making light of Christ and Salvation. *Acts* 28. 26, 27. Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For the Heart of this People is waxen gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, their Eyes are closed, *&c.*

3. When Men have no high Estimation of Christ and Salvation, but whatsoever they may say with their Tongues, or dreamingly and speculatively believe, yet in their serious and practical Thoughts, they have a higher Estimation of the Matters of this World, than they have of Christ and the Salvation that he hath purchased; this is a making light of him. When Men account the Doctrine of Christ to be but a Matter of Words and Names, as *Gallio*, *Acts* 18. 4. or as *Festus*, *Acts* 25. 19. a superstitious Matter about one Jesus who was dead, and *Paul* saith is alive: or ask the Preachers of the Gospel as the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 18. *What will this Babler say?* This is a Contempt of Christ.

4. When Men are informed of the Truths of the Gospel, and on what Terms Christ and his Benefits may be had, and how it is the Will of God that they should *believe* and *accept* the Offer; and that he *commandeth* them to do it upon Pain of Damnation; and yet Men *will* not consent, unless they could have Christ on Terms of their own: they will not part with their worldly Contents, nor lay down their Pleasures and Profits, and Honour at his Feet, as being content to take so much of them only as he will give them back, and as is consistent with his Will and Interest, but think it is a hard saying, that they must forsake all in Resolution for Christ; this is a making light of him and their Salvation. When Men might have part in him and all his Benefits if they *would*, and they *will* not unless they may keep the World too; and are resolved to please their Flesh, what-

whatever comes of it; this is a high Contempt of Christ and everlasting Life. *Mat.* 13. 21, 22. *Luke* 18. 23. you may find Examples of such as I here describe.

5. When Men will promise fair, and profess their Willingness to have Christ on his Terms, and to forsake all for him; but yet *do stick* to the World and their sinful Courses; and when it comes to *Practice*, will not be removed by all that Christ hath done and said: this is making light of Christ and Salvation. *Jer.* 42. 5. compared with 43. 2.

III. The Causes of this Sin are the next thing to be enquired after. It may seem a Wonder that ever Men that have the use of their Reason, should be so sottish as to make light of Matters of such Consequence. But the Cause is;

1. Some Men understand not the very Sense of the Words of the Gospel when they hear it, and how can they be taken with that which they understand not? Though we speak to them in plain English, and study to speak it as plain as we can; yet People have so estranged themselves from God, and the Matters of their own Happiness, that they know not what we say; as if we spoke in another Language, and as if they were under that Judgment, *Isa.* 28. 11. with stammering Lips, and with another Tongue will he speak to this People.

2. Some that do understand the *Words* that we speak, yet because they are carnal, understand not the *Matter*: for the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. They are earthly, and these things are heavenly, *John* 3. 12. The things of the Spirit are not well known by bare hearsay, but by a spiritual Taste, which none have but those that are taught by the Holy Ghost, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. that we may know the things that are given us of God.

3. A carnal Mind apprehendeth not a *Sutableness* in these spiritual and heavenly things to his Mind, and therefore he sets light by them, and hath no mind of them. When you tell him of everlasting Glory, he heareth you as if you were perswading him to go play with the Sun: they are Matters of another World, and out of his Element; and therefore he hath no more Delight in them than a Fish would have to be in the fairest Meadow, or than a Swine hath in a Jewel, or a Dog in a piece of Gold: They may be good to others, but he cannot apprehend them as sutable to him, because he hath a Nature that is otherwise inclined: he savoureth not the things of the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 5.

4. The main Cause of the slighting of Christ and Salvation, is a secret Root of *Unbelief* in Mens Hearts. Whatsoever they may pretend, they do not soundly and throughly *believe* the Word of God: they are taught in general to say, *the Gospel is true*; but they never saw the *Evidence* of its Truth so far as throughly to perswade them of it; nor have they got their Souls settled on the Infallibility of God's Testimony, nor considered of the Truth of the particular Doctrines revealed in the Scripture, so far as soundly to believe them. O did you all but *soundly believe* the Words of this Gospel, of the Evil of Sin, of the Need of Christ, and what he hath done for you, and what you must *be* and *do* if ever you will be saved by him, and what will become of you for ever if you do it not; I dare say, it would cure the Contempt of Christ, and you would not make so light of the Matters of your Salvation. But Men do not *believe* while they say they do, and would face us down that they do, and verily think that they do themselves. There is a Root of bitterness, and an evil Heart of Unbelief, that makes them depart from the living God, *Heb.* 3. 12. and 4. 1, 2, 6. Tell any Man in this Congregation, that he shall have a Gift of 10000 pounds, if he will but go to *London* for it; if he believe you, he will go; but if he believe not, he will not: and if he

will not go, you may be sure he believeth not, supposing that he is able. I know a slight Belief may stand with a wicked Life: Such as Men have of the Truth of a Prognostication, *it may be true and it may be false*; but a *true and sound* Belief is not consistent with so great Neglect of the things that are believed.

5. Christ and Salvation are made light of by the World because of their desperate hardness of Heart. The Heart is hard naturally, and by Custom in sinning made more hard, especially by long abuse of Mercy, and neglect of the means of Grace, and resisting the Spirit of God. Hence it is that Men are turned into such Stones: and till God cure them of the Stone of the Heart, no wonder if they *feel* not what they know, or regard not what we say, but make light of all; 'tis hard preaching a Stone into tears, or making a Rock to tremble. You may stand over a dead Body long enough, and say to it, *O thou Carcase, when thou hast lain rotting and mouldred to Dust till the Resurrection, God will then call thee to account for thy Sin, and cast thee into everlasting Fire*, before you can make it feel what you say, or fear the Misery that is never so truly threatned. When Mens Hearts are like the High-way that is trodden to hardness by long custom in Sinning, or like the Clay that is hardned to a Stone by the heat of those Mercies that should have melted them into Repentance; when they have Consciences seared with an hot Iron, as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. no wonder then if they be past feeling, and working all Uncleanness with greediness, do make light of Christ and everlasting Glory. O that this were not the Case of too many of our Hearers! Had we but *living Souls* to speak to, they would hear, and feel, and not make light of what we say. I know they are naturally alive, but they are spiritually dead, as the Scripture witnesseth, *Ephes.* 2. 3. O if there were but one spark of the Life of Grace in them, the Doctrine of Salvation by Jesus Christ would appear to them to be the weightiest Business in the World.

World. O how confident should I be methinks, to prevail with Men, and to take them off this World, and bring them to mind the Matter of another World, if I spake but to Men that had Life and Sense and Reason; but when we speak to Blocks and dead Men, how should we be regarded? O how sad a Case are these Souls in, that are fallen under this fearful Judgment of spiritual Madness and Deadness! To have a blind Mind, and an hard Heart, to be sottish and senseless, *Mark* 4. 12. *John* 12. 40. lest they should be converted, and their Sins should be forgiven them.

6. Christ and Salvation are made light of by the World, because they are wholly enslaved to their Sense, and taken up with lower things: the Matters of another World are out of sight, and so far from their Senses, that they cannot regard them; but present things are nearer them, in their Eyes, and in their Hands: there must be a living Faith to prevail over Sense, before Men can be so taken with things that are not seen, though they have the Word of God for their Security, as to neglect and let go things that are still before their Eyes. Sense works with great Advantage, and therefore doth much in resisting Faith where it is. No wonder then if it carry all before it, where there is no true and lively Faith to resist, and to lead the Soul to higher things: this Cause of making light of Christ and Salvation, is expressed here in my Text; One went to his Farm, and another to his Merchandize: Men have Houses and Lands to look after: they have Wife and Children to mind, they have their Body and outward Estate to regard; therefore they forget that they have a God, a Redeemer, a Soul to mind; these Matters of the World are still with them. They *see* these, but they *see not* God, nor Christ, nor their Souls, nor everlasting Glory. These things are *near* at hand, and therefore work *naturally*, and so work *forcibly*; but the other are thought on as a great way off, and therefore too distant to work on their Affections, or be at the present so much regard-

ed by them. Their Body hath Life and Senſe; and therefore if they want Meat, or Drink, or Clothes, will feel their Want, and tell them of it, and give them no reſt till their Wants be ſupplied; and therefore they cannot make light of their bodily Neceſſities: but their Souls in ſpiritual Reſpects are dead, and therefore feel not their Wants, but will let them alone in their greateſt Neceſſities; and be as quiet when they are ſtarved and languiſhing to Deſtruction, as if all were well and nothing ailed them. And hereupon poor People are wholly taken up in providing for the Body, as if they had nothing elſe to mind. They have their Trades and Callings to follow, and ſo much to do from Morning to Night, that they can find no time for Matters of Salvation. Chriſt would teach them, but they have no leiſure to hear him: the Bible is before them, but they cannot have while to read it: A Miniſter is in the Town with them, but they cannot have while to go to enquire of him what they ſhould do to be ſaved: And when they do hear, their Hearts are ſo full of the World, and carried away with theſe lower Matters, that they cannot mind the things which they hear. They are ſo full of the Thoughts and Deſires, and Cares of this World, that there is no room to pour into them the Water of Life: The Cares of the World do choak the Word, and make it become unfruitful, *Matth.* 13.22. Men cannot ſerve two Maſters, God and Mammon, but they will lean to the one, and deſpiſe the other, *Matth.* 6. 24. He that loveth the World, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1 *John* 2. 15, 16. Men cannot chooſe but ſet light by Chriſt and Salvation, while they ſet ſo much by any thing on Earth. It is that which is highly eſteemed among Men, is abominable in the Sight of God, *Luke* 16. 15. O this is the Ruine of many thouſand Souls! It would grieve the Heart of any honeſt Chriſtian, to ſee how eagerly this vain World is followed everywhere, and how little Men ſet by Chriſt, and the World to come

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to compare the Care that Men have for the World, with the Care of their Souls; and the time that they lay out on the World, with that time they lay out for their Salvation: To see how the World fills their Mouths, their Hands, their Houses, their Hearts; and Christ hath little more than a bare Title: to come into their Company, and hear no Discourse but of the World; to come into their Houses, and hear and see nothing but for the World, as if this World would last for ever, or would purchase them another. When I ask sometime the Ministers of the Gospel how their Labours succeed, they tell me, *People continue still the same, and give up themselves wholly to the World, so that they mind not what Ministers say to them, nor will give any full Entertainment to the Word, and all because of the deluding World.* And O that too many Ministers themselves did not make light of that Christ whom they preach, being drawn away with the Love of this World! In a Word, Men of a worldly Disposition do judg of things, according to worldly Advantages; therefore Christ is slighted, *Isa.* 53. 3. *He is despised and rejected of Men; they hide their faces from him, and esteem him not, as seeing no Beauty or Comeliness in him, that they should desire him.*

7. Christ and Salvation are made light of, because Men do not soberly *consider* of the Truth and Weight of these necessary things. They suffer not their Minds so long to *dwell* upon them, till they procure a due Esteem, and deeply affect their Heart; did they believe them, and not *consider* of them, how should they work? O when Men have Reason given them to think and consider of the things that most concern them, and yet they will not use it, this causeth their Contempt.

8. Christ and Salvation are made light of, because Men were never *sensible* of their *Sin and Misery*, and *extream Necessity* of Christ and his Salvation: Their Eyes were never opened to see *themselves* as they are; nor

their Hearts soundly humbled in the Sense of their Condition: if this were done, they would soon be brought to value a Saviour. A truly broken Heart can no more make light of Christ and Salvation, than a hungry Man of his Food, or a sick Man of the Means that would give him ease: but till then, our Words cannot have Access to their Hearts. While Sin and Misery is made light of, Christ and Salvation will be made light of; but when these are perceived an intolerable Burden, then nothing will serve the turn but Christ. Till Men be truly humbled, they can venture Christ and Salvation for a Lust, for a little worldly Gain, even for less than nothing: but when God hath illuminated them, and broken their Hearts, then they would give a World for a Christ; then they *must have Christ, or they die; all things then are Loss and Dung to them in regard of the excellent Knowledg of Christ*, Phil. 3. 8. When they are once pricked in their Hearts for Sin and Misery, then they cry out, *Men and Brethren what shall we do?* Acts 2. 37. When they are awakened by God's Judgments, as the poor Jaylor, *Acts* 16. 29. then they cry out, *Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?* This is the Reason why God will bring Men so low by Humiliation, before he bring them to Salvation.

9. Men take occasion to make light of Christ, by the *Commonness* of the Gospel; because they do hear of it every Day, the *frequency* is an Occasion to dull their Affections; I say, an Occasion, for it is no just Cause. Were it a *Rarity*, it might take more with them; but *now*, if they hear a Minister preach nothing but these saving Truths, they say, *We have these every Day*; they make not light of their Bread or Drink, their Health or Life, because they possess them *every day*; they make not light of the Sun, because it shineth *every day*; at least they should not, for the Mercy is the greater: but Christ and Salvation are made light of, because they hear of them often; *This is*, say they, *a good plain dry Sermon: Pearls* are trod in the dirt where they are *common*;

mon; they loath this dry Manna, *Prov.* 27. 7. The full Soul loaths the Hony-comb; but to the Hungry Soul every bitter thing is sweet.

10. Christ and Salvation are made light of, because of this disjunctive *Presumption*, either that he is sure enough *theirs already*, and God that is so merciful, and Christ that hath suffered so much for them, is surely resolved to save them, or else it may easily be obtained at any time, if it be not yet so. A conceited *Facility* to have a part in Christ and Salvation at any time, doth occasion Men to make light of them. It is true, that Grace is *free*, and the Offer is universal, according to the extent of the preaching of the Gospel; and it is true that Men may have Christ *when they will*; that is, when they are willing to have him on his Terms: but he that hath promised thee Christ, if thou be willing, hath not promised to make thee willing; and if thou art not willing *now*, how canst thou think thou shalt be willing hereafter? If thou canst make thine own Heart willing, why is it not done now? Can you do it better when Sin hath more hardned it, and God may have given thee over to thy self? O Sinners, you might do much, though you are not able of your selves to come in, if you would now subject your selves to the working of the Spirit, and set in while the Gales of Grace continue! But did you know what a hard and impossible thing it is to be so much as willing to have Christ and Grace, when the Heart is given over to it self, and the Spirit hath withdrawn its former Invitations, you would not be so confident of your own Strength to believe and repent; nor would you make light of Christ upon such foolish Confidence. If indeed it be so easy a Matter as you imagine for a Sinner to believe and repent at any time; how comes it to pass that it is done by so few, but most of the World do perish in their Impenitency, when they have all the Helps and Means that we can afford them? It is true, the thing is very reasonable and easy in it self to a pure Nature; but while Man

is blind and dead, these things are in a sort impossible to him, which are never so easy to others. It is the easiest and sweetest Life in the World to a gracious Soul to live in the Love of God, and the delightful Thoughts of the Life to come, where all their Hope and Happiness lieth: But to worldly carnal Hearts it is as easy to remove a Mountain, as to bring them to this. However, these Men are their own Condemners: for if they think it so easy a Matter to repent and believe, and so to have Christ and Right to Salvation, then have they no excuse for neglecting this which they thought so easy. O wretched impenitent Soul! what mean you to say, when God shall ask you, *Why did you not repent and love your Redeemer above the World, when you thought it so easy that you could do it at any time?*

IV. *Use* 1. We come now to the Application. And hence you may be informed of the Blindness and Folly of all carnal Men: how *contemptible* are their Judgments that think Christ and Salvation *contemptible:* and how little Reason there is why any should be moved by them, or discouraged by any of their Scorns or Contradictions.

How shall we sooner know a Man to be a Fool, than if he knows no difference between Dung and Gold? Is there such a thing as *madness* in the Word, if that Man be not mad, that sets light by Christ and his own Salvation, while he daily toils for the Dung of the Earth? And yet what pity is it to see that a Company of poor ignorant Souls will be ashamed of Godliness, if such Men as these do but deride them! Or will think hardly of a holy Life, if such as these do speak against it! Hearers, if you see any *set light* by Christ and Salvation, do you *set light* by that Man's *Wit*, and by his *Words*, and hear the Reproaches of a holy Life, as you would hear the Words of a Mad-man; not with regard, but with a Compassion of his Misery.

Use 2. What wonder if we and our preaching be despised, and the best Ministers complain of ill success, when the Ministry of the Apostles themselves did succeed no better? What wonder if for all that we can say or do, our Hearers still set light by Christ and their own Salvation, when the Apostles Hearers did the same? They that did second their Doctrines by Miracles. If any Men could have shaken and torn in pieces the Hearts of Sinners, they could have done it: If any could have laid them at their Feet, and made them all cry out as some, *What shall we do?* it would have been they. You may see then that it is not meerly for want of good Preachers that Men make light of Christ and Salvation: the first News of such a thing as the Pardon of Sin, and the Hopes of Glory, and the Danger of everlasting Misery, would turn the Hearts of Men within them, if they were as tractable in spiritual Matters as in temporal: But alas, it is far otherwise. It must not seem any strange thing, nor must it too much discourage the Preachers of the Gospel, if when they have said all that they can devise to say to win the Hearts of Men to Christ, the most do still slight him; and while they bow the Knee to him, and honour him with their Lips, do yet set so light by him in their Hearts, as to prefer every fleshly Pleasure or Commodity before him. It will be thus with many: let us be glad that it is not thus with all.

Use 3. But for closer Application. Seeing this is the great condemning Sin, before we enquire after it into the Hearts of our Hearers, it beseems us to begin at home, and see that we who are Preachers of the Gospel be not guilty of it our selves. The Lord forbid that they that have undertaken the sacred Office of revealing the Excellencies of Christ to the World, should make light of him themselves, and slight that Salvation which they do daily preach. The Lord knows we

are all of us so low in our Estimation of Christ, and do this great Work so negligently, that we have cause to be ashamed of our best Sermons; but should this Sin prevail in us, we were the most miserable of all Men. Brethren, I love not Censoriousness; yet dare not befriend so vile a Sin in my self or others under pretence of avoiding it, especially when there is so great Necessity that it should be healed first in them that make it their Work to heal it in others. O that there were no cause to complain that Christ and Salvation are made light of by the Preachers of it! But, 1. Do not the negligent Studies of some speak it out? 2. Doth not their dead and drowsy Preaching declare it? Do not they make light of the Doctrine they preach, that do it as if they were half asleep, and feel not what they speak themselves?

3. Doth not the Carelesness of some Mens private Endeavours discover it? What do they for Souls? how slightly do they reprove Sin? how little do they when they are out of the Pulpit for the saving of Mens Souls?

4. Doth not the continued Neglect of those things wherein the Interest of Christ consisteth discover it? 1. The Churches Purity and Reformation; 2. Its Unity.

5. Doth not the covetous and worldly Lives of too many discover it, losing Advantages for Mens Souls for a little Gain to themselves? and most of this is because Men are Preachers before they are Christians, and tell Men of that which they never felt themselves. Of all Men on Earth, there are few that are in so sad a Condition as such Ministers: and if indeed they do believe that Scripture which they preach, methinks it should be terrible to them in their studying and preaching it.

Use 4. Beloved Hearers; the Office that God hath called us to, is, by declaring the Glory of his Grace, to help

help under Christ to the saving of Mens Souls. I hope you think not that I come hither to Day on any other Errand. The Lord knows I had not set a Foot out of Doors, but in hope to succeed in this Work for your Souls. I have considered and often considered, what is the matter that so many thousands should perish when God hath done so much for their Salvation; and I find this that is mentioned in my Text is the Cause. It is one of the Wonders of the World, that when God hath so loved the World as to send his Son, and Christ hath made a Satisfaction by his Death sufficient for them all, and offereth the Benefits of it so freely to them, even without Money or Price, that yet the most of the World should perish; yea the most of those that are thus called by his Word! Why here is the Reason, when Christ hath done all this, Men make light of it. God hath shewed that *he* is not unwilling; and Christ hath shewed that *he* is not unwilling that Men should be restored to God's Favour and be saved; but Men are actually unwilling *themselves*. God takes not *pleasure* in the Death of Sinners, but rather that they return and live, *Ezek.* 33. 11. But Men take such *pleasure* in Sin, that they will die before they will return. The Lord Jesus was content to be their Physician, and hath provided them a sufficient Plaister of his own Blood: but if Men make light of it, and will not apply it, what wonder if they perish after all? This Scripture giveth us the Reason of their Perdition. This sad Experience tells us the most of the World is guilty of. It is a most lamentable thing to see how most Men do spend their Care, their Time, their Pains for known Vanities, while God and Glory are cast aside: That he who is *all*, should seem to them as *nothing*; and that which is *nothing*, should seem to them as good as *all*; that God should set Mankind in such a Race where Heaven or Hell is their certain End, and that they should sit down, and loiter, or run after the childish Toys of the World, and so much forget the Prize that they should run for. Were it but

possible for one of us to see the *whole* of this Business, as the All-seeing God doth; to see at one View both Heaven and Hell which Men are so near, and see what most Men in the World are minding, and what they are doing every Day, it would be the saddest sight that could be imagined. O how should we marvel at their Madness, and lament their Self-delusion! O poor distracted World! what is it that you run after? and what is it that you neglect? If God had never told them what they were sent into the Word to do, or whither they were going, or what was before them in another World, then they had been excusable; but he hath told them over and over, till they were weary of it. Had he left it doubtful, there had been some excuse; but it is his sealed Word, and they profess to believe it, and would take it ill of us if we should question whether they do believe it or not.

Beloved, I come not to accuse any of you particularly of this Crime: but seeing it is the commonest Cause of Mens Destruction, I suppose you will judg it the fittest Matter for our Enquiry, and deserving our greatest Care for the Cure. To which end I shall, 1. Endeavour the *Conviction* of the Guilty. 2. Shall give them such Considerations as may tend to humble and reform them. 3. I shall conclude with such Direction as may help them that are willing to escape the destroying Power of this Sin. And for the first, consider,

1. It is the Case of most Sinners to think themselves freest from those Sins that they are most enslaved to; and one reason why we cannot reform them, is, because we cannot convince them of their Guilt. It is the Nature of Sin so far to blind and befool the Sinner, that he knoweth not what he doth, but thinketh he is free from it when it reigneth in him, or when he is committing it: It bringeth Men to be so much unacquainted with themselves, that they know not what they think, or what they mean and intend, nor what they love or hate, much less what they are habituated and disposed

to. They are alive to Sin, and dead to all the Reason, Consideration and Resolution that should recover them, as if it were only by their sinning that we must know they are alive. May I hope that you that hear me to Day, are but willing to know the Truth of your Case, and then I shall be encouraged to proceed to an enquiry. God will judg impartially; why should not we do so? Let me therefore by these following Questions, try whether none of you are Slighters of Christ and your own Salvation. And follow me, I beseech you, by putting them close to your own Hearts, and faithfully answering them.

1. Things that Men highly value will be *remembred*, they will be matter of their freest and sweetest thoughts; this a known Case.

Do not those then make light of Christ and Salvation, that think of them so seldom and coldly in comparison of other things? Follow thy own Heart Man, and observe what it daily runneth out after; and then judg whether it make not light of Christ.

We cannot perswade Men to one Hour's sober Consideration what they should do for an Interest in Christ, or in Thankfulness for his Love, and yet they will not believe that they make light of him.

2. Things that we highly value will be Matter of our Discourse: The Judgment and Heart will command the Tongue: Freely and delightfully will our Speech run after them: this also is a known Case.

Do not those then make light of Christ and Salvation, that shun the mention of his Name, unless it be in a vain or sinful Use? Those that love not the Company where Christ and Salvation is much talk'd of, but think it troublesom precise Discourse; that had rather hear some merry Jests, or idle Tales, or talk of their Riches or Business in the World: When you may follow them from Morning to Night, and scarce have a savoury Word of Christ, but perhaps some slight and weary mention of him sometimes; judg whether these make not light of Christ and Salvation. How seriously

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do they talk of the World, *Psal.* 144. 8, 11. and speak Vanity! but how heartlesly do they make mention of Christ and Salvation?

3. The things that we highly value, we would secure the Possession of, and therefore would take any convenient Course to have all Doubts and Fears about them well resolved. Do not those Men then make light of Christ and Salvation, that have lived 20 or 30 Years in Uncertainty whether they have any part in these or not, and yet never seek out for the right Resolution of their Doubts? Are all that hear me this Day certain they shall be saved? O that they were! O had you not made light of Salvation, you could not so easily bear such Doubtings of it; you could not rest till you had made it sure, or done your best to make it sure. Have you no Body to enquire of, that might help you in such a Work? Why you have Ministers that are purposely appointed to that Office. Have you gone to them, and told them the Doubtfulness of your Case, and asked their Help in the judging of your Condition? Alas, Ministers may sit in their Studies from one Year to another, before ten Persons among 1000 will come to them on such an Errand! Do not these make light of Christ and Salvation? When the Gospel pierceth the Heart indeed, they cry out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved? Acts* 16. 30. and 9. 6. trembling and astonished *Paul* cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And so did the convinced Jews to *Peter*, *Acts* 2. 37. But when hear we such Questions?

4. The things that we value, do *deeply affect* us, and some Motions will be in the Heart according to our Estimation of them. O Sirs, if Men made not light of these things, what working would there be in the Hearts of all our Hearers? what strange Affections would it raise in them to hear of the Matters of the World to come! How would their Hearts melt before the Power of the Gospel! what Sorrow would be wrought in the Discovery of their Sin! what Astonishment at the Consideration

ſideration of their Miſery! what unſpeakable Joy at the glad Tidings of Salvation by the Blood of Chriſt! what Reſolution would be raiſed in them upon the Diſcovery of their Duty! O what Hearers ſhould we have if it were not for this Sin! Whereas now we are liker to weary them, or preach them aſleep with Matters of this unſpeakable Moment. We talk to them of Chriſt and Salvation, till we make their Heads ake: Little would one think by their careleſs Carriage, that they heard and regarded what we ſaid, or thought we ſpoke at all to them.

5. Our Eſtimation of things will be ſeen in the diligence of our Endeavours. That which we highlieſt value, we ſhall think no pains too great to obtain. Do not thoſe Men then make light of Chriſt and Salvation, that think all too much that they do for them, that murmur at his Service, and think it too grievous for them to endure? that ask of his Service, as *Judas* of the Ointment, *What need this waſte? cannot Men be ſaved without ſo much ado? this is more ado than needs.* For the World they will labour all the Day, and all their Lives; but for Chriſt and Salvation they are afraid of doing too much. Let us preach to them as long as we will, we cannot bring them to reliſh or reſolve upon a Life of Holineſs. Follow them to their Houſes, and you ſhall not hear them read a Chapter, nor call upon God with their Families once a Day; nor will they allow him that one Day in ſeven which he hath ſeparated to his Service. But Pleaſure, or worldly Buſineſs, or Idleneſs muſt have a part. And many of them are ſo far hardened, as to reproach them that will not be as mad as themſelves. And is not Chriſt worth the ſeeking? Is not everlaſting Salvation worth more than all this? Doth not that Soul make light of all theſe, that thinks his Eaſe more worth than they? Let but common Senſe judg.

6. That which we moſt highly value, we think we cannot *buy too dear:* Chriſt and Salvation are freely given, and yet the moſt of Men go without them, becauſe

they

they cannot enjoy the World and them together. They are called but to part with that which would hinder them from Christ, and they will not do it. They are called but to give God his own, and to resign all to his Will, and let go the Profits and Pleasures of this World, when they must let go either Christ or them; and they will not. They think this too dear a Bargain, and say they cannot spare these things; they must hold their Credit with Men; they must look to their Estates, how shall they live else? they must have their Pleasure, whatsoever becomes of Christ and Salvation: As if they could live without Christ better than without these: as if they were afraid of being Losers by Christ, or could make a saving Match by losing their Souls to gain the World. Christ hath told us over and over, that if we will not forsake all for him, we cannot be his Disciples, *Luke* 14. 33. Far are these Men from forsaking all, and yet will needs think that they are his Disciples indeed.

7. That which Men highly esteem, they would *help their Friends to* as well as themselves. Do not those Men make light of Christ and Salvation, that can take so much care to leave their Children Portions in the World, and do so little to help them to Heaven? that provide outward Necessaries so carefully for their Families, but do so little to the saving of their Souls? Their neglected Children and Friends will witness, that either Christ, or their Childrens Souls, or both were made light of.

8. That which Men highly esteem, they will so diligently seek after, that you may see it in the *success*, if it be a Matter within their reach. You may see how many make light of Christ, by the little Knowledg they have of him, and the little Communion with him, and Communication from him; and the little, yea, none of his special Graces in them. Alas, how many Ministers can speak it to the Sorrow of their Hearts, that many of their People know almost nothing of Christ, though they

they hear of him daily, nor know they what they must do to be saved! If we ask them an account of these things, they answer as if they understood not what we say to them, and tell us they are no Scholars, and therefore think they are excusable for their Ignorance. O if these Men had not made light of Christ and their Salvation, but had bestowed but half so much Pains to know and enjoy him, as they have done to understand the Matters of their Trades and Callings in the World, they would not have been so ignorant as they are: they make light of these things, and therefore will not be at the Pains to study or learn them. When Men that can learn the hardest Trade in a few Years, have not learned a Catechism, nor how to understand their Creed, under twenty or thirty Years Preaching, nor cannot abide to be questioned about such things; doth not this shew that they have slighted them in their Hearts? How will these Despisers of Christ and Salvation be able one Day to look him in the Face, and to give an account of these Neglects?

Thus much I have spoken in order to your Conviction. Do not some of your Consciences by this time smite you, and say, *I am the Man that have made light of my Salvation?* If they do not, it is because you make light of it still for all that is said to you. But because, if it be the Will of the Lord, I would fain have this damning Distemper cured, and am loth to leave you in such a desperate Condition, if I knew how to remedy it, I will give you some Considerations, which may move you, if you be Men of Reason and Understanding, to look better about you; and I beseech you weigh them, and make use of them as we go, and lay open your Hearts to the Work of Grace, and sadly bethink you what a Case you are in, if you prove such as make light of Christ.

Consider, 1. Thou makest light of him that made not light of thee who didst deserve it. Thou wast wor-

thy of nothing but Contempt. As a Man, what art thou but a Worm to God? As a Sinner, thou art far viler than a Toad: yet Christ was so far from making light of thee and thy Happiness, that he came down into the Flesh, and lived a Life of Suffering, and offered himself a Sacrifice to the Justice which thou hadst provoked, that thy miserable Soul might have a Remedy. It is no less than Miracles of Love and Mercy that he hath shewed to us: and yet shall we slight them after all?

Angels admire them, whom they less concern, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. and shall redeemed Sinners make light of them? What barbarous, yea deviliſh, yea worse than deviliſh Ingratitude is this? the Devils never had a Saviour offered them, but thou hast, and dost thou yet make light of him?

2. Consider the Work of Man's Salvation by Jesus Christ is the Master-piece of all the Works of God, wherein he would have his Love and Mercy to be magnified. As the Creation declareth his Goodness and Power, so doth Redemption his Goodness and Mercy; he hath contrived the very Frame of his Worship so, that it shall much consist in the magnifying of this Work; and after all this, will you make light of it? His Name is Wonderful, *Isa.* 9. 6. He did the Work that none could do, *John* 15. 24. Greater Love could none shew than this, *John* 15. 13. How great was the Evil and Misery that he delivered us from! the Good procured for us! all are Wonders from his Birth to his Ascension; from our new Birth to our Glorification, all are Wonders of matchless Mercy. And yet do you make light of them!

3. You make light of Matters of *greatest Excellency and Moment in the World:* you know not what it is that you slight; had you well known, you could not have done it. As Christ said to the Woman of *Samaria*, *John* 4. 10. hadst thou known who it is that speaketh to thee, thou wouldst have asked of him the Waters of Life: had they *known*, they would not have crucified

the

the Lord of Glory, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. So had you known what Christ is, you would not have made light of him; Had you been one Day in Heaven, and but seen what they possess, and seen also what miserable Souls must endure that are shut out, you would never sure have made so light of Christ again.

O Sirs, it is no Trifles or jesting Matters that the Gospel speaks of. I must needs profess to you, that when I have the most serious Thoughts of these things my self, I am ready to marvel that such amazing Matters do not overwhelm the Souls of Men: that the Greatness of the Subject doth not so overmatch our Understandings and Affections, as even to drive Men beside themselves, but that God hath always somewhat allayed it by the distance; much more that Men should be so blockish as to make light of them. O Lord, that Men did but know what everlasting Glory, and everlasting Torments are; would they then hear us as they do? would they read and think of these things as they do? I profess I have been ready to wonder when I have heard such weighty things delivered, how People can forbear crying out in the Congregation; much more, how they can rest till they have gone to their Ministers and learned what they should do to be saved, that this great Business might be put out of doubt. O that Heaven and Hell should work no more on Men! O that Everlastingness should work no more! O how can you forbear when you are alone, to think with your selves what it is to be everlastingly in Joy or in Torment! I wonder that such Thoughts do not break your Sleep; and that they come not in your mind when you are about your Labour! I wonder how you can almost do any thing else! How you can have any Quietness in your Minds! How you can eat, or drink, or rest, till you have got some Ground of everlasting Consolations! Is that a *Man* or a *Corps* that is not affected with Matters of this Moment? that can be readier to sleep, than to tremble, when he heareth how he must stand at the Bar of

God!

God! Is that a *Man*, or *a Clod of Clay*, that can rise and lie down without being deeply affected with his everlasting Estate? that can follow his worldly Business, and make nothing of the great Business of Salvation or Damnation; and that when they know it is hard at hand. Truly Sirs, when I think of the Weight of the Matter, I wonder at the very best of God's Saints upon Earth, that they are no better, and do no more in so weighty a Case. I wonder at those whom the World accounteth more holy than needs, and scorns for making too much ado; that they can put off Christ and their Souls with so little; that they pour not out their Souls in every Supplication; that they are not more taken up with God; that their Thoughts be not more serious in preparation for their Account. I wonder that they be not an hundred times more strict in their Lives, and more laborious and unwearied in striving for the Crown, than they are. And for my self, as I am ashamed of my dull and careless Heart, and of my slow and unprofitable Course of Life; so the Lord knows, I am ashamed of every Sermon that I preach: when I think *what* I have been speaking of, and *who* sent me; and that Mens Salvation or Damnation is so much concerned in it. I am ready to tremble, lest God should judg me as a Slighter of his Truth, and the Souls of Men, and lest in the best Sermon I should be guilty of their Blood. Methinks we should not speak a Word to Men in Matters of such Consequence, without Tears, or the greatest Earnestness that possibly we can: were not we too much guilty of the Sin which we reprove, it would be so. Whether we are alone, or in Company, methinks our End, and such an End, should still be in our Mind, and as before our Eyes; and we should sooner forget any thing, and set light by any thing, or by all things, than by this.

Consider, 4. Who is it that sends this weighty Message to you? Is it not God himself? Shall the God of Heaven speak, and Men make light of it? You would

would not slight the Voice of an Angel or a Prince.

5. *Whose* Salvation is it that you make light of? Is it not your own? Are you no more near or dear to your selves, than to make light of your *own* Happiness or Misery? Why Sirs, do you not care whether you be saved or damned? Is Self-love lost? Are you turned your own Enemies? As he that slighteth his Meat doth slight his Life; so if you slight Christ, whatsoever you may think, you will find it was your own Salvation that you slighted. Hear what he saith, *Prov.* 8. 36. *All they that hate me, love Death.*

6. Your Sin is greater, in that you profess to believe the Gospel which you make so light of. For a professed Infidel to do it, that believes not that ever Christ died, or rose again, or doth not believe that there is an Heaven or Hell, this were no such marvel; but for you that make it your Creed, and your very Religion, and call your selves Christians, and have been baptized into this Faith, and seemed to stand to it, this is the Wonder, and hath no Excuse. What! believe that you shall live in endless Joy or Torment, and yet make no more of it, to escape Torment, and obtain that Joy. What! believe that God will shortly judg you, and yet make no more Preparation for it. Either say plainly, *I am no Christian, I do not believe these wonderful things, I will believe nothing but what I see*; or else let your Hearts be affected with your Belief, and live as you say you do believe. What do you think when you repeat the Creed, and mention Christ's Judgment, and everlasting Life?

7. What are these things you set so much by, as to prefer them before Christ, and the saving of your Souls? Have you found a better Friend, a greater and surer Happiness than this? Good Lord! what Dung is it that Men make so much of, while they set so light by everlasting Glory! What Toys are they that they are daily taken up with, while Matters of Life and Death are neglected! Why Sirs, if you had every one a Kingdom in your Hopes, what were it in comparison of the everlasting

lasting Kingdom? I cannot but look upon all the Glory and Dignity of this World, Lands and Lordships, Crowns and Kingdoms, even as on some brainsick beggarly Fellow, that borroweth fine Clothes, and plays the Part of a King or a Lord for an Hour on a Stage, and then comes down, and the Sport is ended, and they are Beggars again. Were it not for God's Interest in the Authority of Magistrates, or for the Service they might do him, I should judg no better of them. For as to their own Glory, it is but a Smoak: what matter is it whether you live poor or rich, unless it were a greater Matter to *die* rich than it is? You know well enough that Death levels all: what Matter is it at Judgment, whether you be to answer for the Life of a rich Man, or a poor Man? Is *Dives* then any better than *Lazarus*? O that Men knew what a poor deceiving Shadow they grasp at, while they let go the everlasting Substance! The strongest and richest, and most voluptuous Sinners, do but lay in fuel for their Sorrows, while they think they are gathering together a Treasure. Alas, they are asleep, and dream that they are happy; but when they awake, what a Change will they find! Their Crown is made of Thorns: their Pleasure hath such a Sting as will stick in the Heart through all Eternity, except unfeigned Repentance do prevent it. O how sadly will these Wretches be convinced ere long what a foolish Bargain they made in selling Christ and their Salvation for these Trifles! Let your Farms and Merchandize then save you if they can, and do that for you that Christ would have done. Cry then to thy *Baal* to save thee. O what Thoughts have Drunkards and Adulterers, *&c.* of Christ, that will not part with the basest Lust for him! For a piece of Bread, saith *Solomon*, such Men do transgress, *Prov.* 28. 21.

8. To set so light by Christ and Salvation is a certain Mark that thou hast no part in them, and if thou so continue, that Christ will set *as light* by thee: those that honour him he will honour, and those that despise him

shall

ſhall be lightly eſteemed, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. Thou wilt feel one Day that thou canſt not live without him. Thou wilt confeſs then thy need of him; and then thou mayeſt go look for a Saviour where thou wilt, for he will be no Saviour for thee hereafter, that wouldſt not value him, and ſubmit to him here. Then who will prove the Loſer by thy Contempt? O what a thing will it be for a poor miſerable Soul to cry to Chriſt for Help in the Day of Extremity, and to hear ſo ſad an Anſwer as this! Thou didſt ſet light by me and my Law in the Day of thy Proſperity, and I will now ſet as light by thee in thy Adverſity. Read *Prov.* 1. 24 to the end. Thou that, as *Eſau*, didſt ſell thy Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage, ſhalt then find no Place for Repentance, though thou ſeek it with Tears, *Heb.* 12. 17. Do you think that Chriſt ſhed his Blood to ſave them that continue to make light of it? and to ſave them that value a Cup of Drink, or a Luſt, before his Salvation? I tell you Sirs, though *you* ſet ſo light by Chriſt and Salvation, *God* doth not ſo: He will not give them on ſuch Terms as theſe: He valueth the Blood of his Son, and the everlaſting Glory; and he will make *you* value them, if ever you have them. Nay, this will be thy Condemnation, and leaveth no Remedy. All the World cannot ſave him that ſets light by Chriſt, *Heb.* 2. 3. *Luke* 14. 24. None of them ſhall taſte of his Supper, *Mat.* 10. 37. Nor can you blame him to deny you what you made light of your ſelves. Can you find fault if you miſs of the Salvation which you ſlighted?

9. The time is near when Chriſt and Salvation will not be made light of, as now they are. When God hath ſhaken thoſe careleſs Souls out of their Bodies, and you muſt anſwer for all your Sins in your own Name; O then, what would you give for a Saviour! when a thouſand Bills ſhall be brought in againſt you, and none to relieve you, then you will conſider, *O Chriſt would now have ſtood between me and the Wrath of God: had I not deſpiſed him, he would have anſwered all.* When you ſee the World

hath

hath left you, and your Companions in Sin have deceived themselves and you, and all your merry Days are gone; then what would you give for that Christ and Salvation that now you account not worth your Labour? Do you think, when you see the Judgment set, and you are doomed to everlasting Perdition for your Wickedness, that you should then make as light of Christ as now? Why will you not judg now, as you know you shall judg then? Will he then be worth ten thousand Worlds, and is he not now worth your highest Estimation, and dearest Affection?

10. God will not only deny thee that Salvation thou madest light of, but he will take from thee all that which thou didst value before it: He that most highly esteems Christ, shall have him and the Creatures so far as they are good here, and him without the Creature hereafter, because the Creature is not useful; and he that sets more by the Creature than by Christ, shall have some of the Creature without Christ here, and neither Christ nor it hereafter.

So much of these Considerations, which may shew the true Face of this heinous Sin.

What think you now, Friends, of this Business? Do you not see by this time what a Case that Soul is in that maketh light of Christ and Salvation? What need then is there that you should take heed lest this should prove your own Case? The Lord knows it is too common a Case. Whoever is found guilty at the last of this Sin, it were better for that Man he had never been born. It were better for him he had been a *Turk* or *Indian*, that never had heard the Name of a Saviour, and that never had Salvation offered to him: For such Men have no cloak for their Sin, *John* 15. 22. Besides all the rest of their Sins, they have this killing Sin to answer for, which will undo them. And this will aggravate their Misery, *That* Christ whom they set light by, must be their Judg, and for *this* Sin will he judg them. O that such would now consider how they will answer that Question

that

that Christ puts to their Predecessors, *Matth.* 23. 33. *How will ye escape the Damnation of Hell?* or *Heb.* 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?* Can you escape without a Christ? or will a despised Christ save you then? If he be accursed that sets light by Father or Mother, *Deut.* 27. 16. what then is he that sets light by Christ? It was the heinous Sin of the Jews, that among them were found such as set light by Father and Mother, *Ezek.* 22. 7. but among us, Men slight the Father of Spirits. In the Name of God, Brethren, I beseech you to consider how you will then bear his Anger which you now make light of? You that cannot make light of a little Sickness or Want, or of natural Death, no not of a Tooth-ach, but groan as if you were undone, how will you then make light of the Fury of the Lord, which will burn against the Contemners of his Grace? Doth it not behove you beforehand to think of these things?

Hitherto I have been convincing you of the Evil of the Sin, and the Danger that followeth: I come now to know your Resolution for the time to come. What say you? Do you mean to set as light by Christ and Salvation as hitherto you have done? and to be the same Men after all this? I hope not. O let not your Ministers that would fain save you, be brought in as Witnesses against you to condemn you. At least, I beseech you put not this upon me. Why Sirs, if the Lord shall say to us at Judgment, Did you never tell these Men what Christ did for their Souls, and what need they had of him, and how nearly it did concern them to look to their Salvation, that they made not light of it? we must needs say the Truth: Yea Lord, we told them of it as plainly as we could; we would have gone on our Knees to them, if we had thought it would have prevailed; we did intreat them as earnestly as we could to consider these things: they heard of these things every day; but alas, we could never get 'em to their Hearts: they gave us the hearing, but they made light of all that we could say to them.

O sad will it prove on your side, if you force us to such an Answer as this.

But if the Lord do move the Hearts of any of you, and you resolve to make light of Christ no more: Or if any of you say, We do not make light of him; let me tell you here in the Conclusion, what you must do, or else you shall be judged as Slighters of Christ and Salvation.

And first, I will tell you what will not serve the turn.

1. You may have a notional Knowledg of Christ, and the Necessity of his Blood, and of the Excellency of Salvation, and yet perish as Neglecters of him. This is too common among professt Christians. You may say all that other Men do of him. What Gospel-Passages had *Balaam?* Jesus I know, and *Paul* I know, the very Devils could say, who believe and tremble, *Jam.* 2. 19.

2. You may weep at the History of his Passion, when you read how he was used by the Jews; and yet make light of him, and perish for so doing.

3. You may come desirously to his Word and Ordinances. *Herod* heard gladly; so do many that yet must perish as Neglecters of Salvation.

4. You may in a fit of Fear have strong Desires after a Christ to ease you, and to save you from God's Wrath, as *Saul* had of *David* to play before him; and yet you may perish for making light of Christ.

5. You may obey him in many things, so far as will not ruine you in the World, and escape much of the Pollutions of the World by his Knowledg; and yet neglect him.

6. You may suffer and lose much for him, so far as leaveth you an earthly Felicity; as *Ananias*, the young Man. Some Parcels of their Pleasures and Profits many will part with in Hope of Salvation, that shall perish everlastingly, for valuing it no more.

7. You

7. You may be esteemed by others a Man zealous for Christ, and loved and admired upon that account, and yet be one that shall perish for makig light of him.

8. You may verily think your selves, that you set more by Christ and Salvation than any thing, and yet be mistaken, and be judged as Contemners of him: Christ justifieth not all that justify themselves.

9. You may be zealous Preachers of Christ and Salvation, and reprove others for this neglect, and lament the Sin of the World in the like Expression as I have done this Day; and yet if you or I have no better Evidence to prove our hearty Esteem of Christ and Salvation, we are undone for all this.

You hear, Brethren, what will *not* serve the turn; will you now hear what Persons you *must* be if you would not be condemned as Slighters of Christ? O search whether it be thus with your Souls or no.

1. Your Esteem of Christ and Salvation, must be greater than your Esteem of all the Honours, Profits or Pleasures of this World, or else you slight him: *No less* will be accounted sincere, nor accepted to your Salvation: Think not this hard, when there is no Comparison in the Matters esteemed. To esteem the greatest Glory on Earth before Christ and everlasting Glory, is a greater Folly, and Wrong to Christ, than to esteem a Dog before your Prince, would be Folly in you, and a Wrong to him. Scripture is plain in this, *Matth.* 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother, Wife, Children, House, Land, or his own Life more than me, is not worthy of me, and cannot be my Disciple*, as *Luke* 14. 26.

2. You must manifest this Esteem of Christ and Salvation in your daily Endeavours and seeking after him, and in parting with any thing that he shall require of you. God is a Spirit, and will not take an hypocritical Profession instead of the Heart and spiritual Service which he commandeth. He will have the Heart or nothing; and the chief Room in the Heart too. These must be had.

If you say that you do not make light of Christ, or will not hereafter, let me try you in these few Particulars, whether indeed you mean as you say, and do not dissemble.

1. Will you for the time to come make Christ and Salvation the chiefest Mater of your Care and Study? Thrust them not out of your Thoughts, as a needless or unprofitable Subject; nor allow it only some running slight Thoughts, which will no affect you. But will you make it your Business once a Day to bethink you soberly when you are alone, what Christ hath done for you; and what he will do if you do not make light of it; and what it is to be everlastingly happy or miserable? and what all things in this World are in comparison of your Salvation? and how they will shortly leave you? and what mind you will be then of, and how you will esteem them? Will you promise me now and then to make it your Business to withdraw your selves from the World, and set your selves to such Considerations as these? If you will not, are not you Slighters of Christ and Salvation, that will not be perswaded soberly to think on them? This is my first Question to put you to the Trial, whether you will value Christ or not.

2. Will you for the time to come, set more by the Word of God, which contains the Discovery of these excellent things, and is your Charter for Salvation, and your Guide thereunto? You cannot set by Christ, but you must set by his Word: Therefore the Despisers of it are threatned with Destruction, *Prov.* 13. 13. Will you therefore attend to the publick preaching of this Word? will you read it daily? will you resolve to obey it whatever it may cost you? If you will not do this, but make light of the Word of God, you shall be judged such as make light of Christ and Salvation, whatever you may fondly promise to your selves.

3. Will you for the time to come, esteem more of the *Officers* of Christ, whom he hath purposely appointed to *guide* you to Salvation? and will you make use of them for that end? Alas, it is not to give the Minister a good Word, and speak well of him, and pay him his Tithes duly, that will serve the turn: It is for the Necessity of *your* Souls that God hath set them in his Church; that they may be as Physicians under Christ, or his Apothecaries to apply his Remedies to your spiritual Diseases, not only in publick, but also in private: That you may have some to go to for the resolving of your Doubts, and for your Instruction where you are ignorant, and for the help of their Exhortations and Prayers. Will you use hereafter to go to your Ministers privately, and solicite them for Advice? and if you have not such of your own as are fit, get Advice from others; and ask them *What you shall do to be saved? how to prepare for Death and Judgment?* and will you obey the Word of God in their Mouths? If you will not do this much, nor so much as enquire of those that should teach you, nor use the Means which Christ hath established in his Church for your help, your own Consciences shall one Day witness, that you were such as made light of Christ and Salvation. If any of you doubt whether it be your Duty thus to ask Counsel of your Teachers, as sick Men do of their Physicians, let your own Necessities resolve you; let God's express Word resolve you: see what is said of the Priests of the Lord, even before Christ's coming, when much of their Work did lie in Ceremonials; *Mal.* 2. 5, 6. *My Covenant was with him of Life and Peace: and I gave them to him* (to *Levi*) *for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my Name. The Law of Truth was in his Mouth, and Iniquity was not found in his Lips; he walked with me in Peace and Equity, and did turn many away from Iniquity. For the Priests Lips should keep Knowledg, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

Nay, you must not only enquire, and submit to their Advice, but also to their just Reprehensions and Church-Censures: And without proud Repining submit to the Discipline of Christ in their Hands, if it shall be used in the Congregations whereof you are Members.

4. Will you for the time to come make Conscience of daily and earnest Prayer to God, that you may have a Part in Christ and Salvation? do not go out of Doors till you have breathed out these Desires to God; do not lie down to rest till you have breathed out these Desires: say not, God knoweth my Necessity without so often praying; for though he do, yet he will have you to know them and feel them, and exercise your Desires, and all the Graces of his Spirit in these Duties: It is he that hath commanded to pray continually, though he know your Needs without, 1 *Thess.* 5. 17. Christ himself spent whole Nights in Prayer, and encourageth us to this Course, *Luke* 18.1. If you will not be perswaded to this much, how can you say that you make not light of Christ and Salvation?

5. Will you for the time to come resolvedly cast away your known Sins at the Command of Christ? If you have been proud or contentious, or malicious and revengeful, be so no more. If you have been Adulterers, or Swearers, or Cursers, be so no more. You cannot hold these, and yet set by Christ and Salvation.

What say you? Are you resolved to let them go? If not, when you know 'tis the Will of Christ, and he hath told you such shall not enter into his Kingdom, do not you make light of him?

6. Will you for the time to come serve God in the *dearest* as well as the *cheapest* Part of his Service; not only with your Tongues, but with your Purses and your Deeds? shall the Poor find that you set more by Christ than this World? shall it appear in any good Uses that God

God calls you to be liberal in, according to your Abilities? Pure Religion and undefiled before God is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, *Jam.* 1. *ult.* Will you resolve to stick to Christ, and make sure this Work of Salvation, though it cost you all that you have in the World? If you think these Terms too dear, you make light of Christ, and will be judged accordingly.

7. Will you for the time to come make much of all things that tend to your Salvation; and take every help that God offereth you, and gladly make use of all his Ordinances? Attend upon his strengthening Sacraments, spend the Lord's own Day in these holy Imployments. Instruct your Children and Servants in these things, *Deut.* 6, 7. get into good Company that set their Faces Heaven-ward, and will teach you the way, and help you thither: and take heed of the Company of wicked Scorners, or foolish, voluptuous, fleshly Men, or any that would hinder you in this Work. Will you do these things? Or will you shew that you are Slighters of Christ by neglecting them?

8. Will you do all this with Delight, not as your Toil, but as your Pleasure? and take it for your highest Honour that you may be Christ's Disciples, and may be *admitted* to serve and worship him; and rejoice with holy Confidence in the sufficiency of that Sacrifice by which you may have Pardon of all your Failings, and right to the Inheritance of the Saints in light? If you will do these things sincerely, you will shew that you set by Christ and Salvation; else not.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord, I have now done that Work which I came upon; what Effect it hath, or will have upon your Hearts, I know not, nor is it any further in my Power to accomplish that which my Soul desireth for you. Were it the Lord's Will that I might have my wish herein, the Words that you have this Day heard should so stick by you, that the Secure should be

be awakened by them, and none of you ſhould periſh by the ſlighting of your Salvation. I cannot now follow you to your ſeveral Habitations, to apply the Word to your particular Neceſſities: but O that I could make every Man's *Conſcience* a Preacher to himſelf; that *it* might do it, which is ever with you; that the next time you go prayerleſs to Bed, or about your ſineſs, Conſcience might cry out, *Doſt thou ſet no more by Chriſt and by Salvation?* that the next time you are tempted to think hardly of an holy and diligent Life, (I will not ſay to deride it as *more ado than needs*) Conſcience might cry out to thee, *Doſt thou ſet ſo light by Chriſt and thy Salvation?* that the next time you are ready to ruſh upon known Sin, and to pleaſe your fleſhly deſires againſt the Command of God, Conſcience might cry out, *Is Chriſt and Salvation no more worth, than to caſt them away, or venture them for thy Luſts?* that when you are following the World with your most eager Deſires, forgetting the World to come and the Change that is a little before you, Conſcience might cry out to you, *Is Chriſt and Salvation no more worth than ſo?* That when you are next ſpending the Lord's Day in Idleneſs or vain Sports, Conſcience might tell you what you are doing. In a Word, that in all your Neglects of Duty, your ſticking at the ſuppoſed Labour or Coſt of a godly Life, yea in all your cold and lazy Prayers and Performances, Conſcience might tell you how unſuitable ſuch Endeavours are to the Reward; and that Chriſt and Salvation ſhould not be ſo ſlighted. I will ſay no more but this, at this time, it is a thouſand Pities that when God hath provided a Saviour for the World, and when Chriſt hath ſuffered ſo much for their Sins, and made ſo full a Satisfaction to Juſtice, and purchaſed ſo glorious a Kingdom for his Saints, all this is offered ſo freely to Sinners, to loſt unworthy Sinners, even for nothing, that yet ſo many Millions ſhould everlaſtingly periſh becauſe they *make light*

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their *Saviour and Salvation, and prefer the vain World and their Lusts before them.* I have delivered my Message; the Lord open your Hearts to receive it: I have perswaded you with the *Word* of Truth and Soberness; the Word perswade you more effectually, or else all this is

FINIS.